BUSINESS / B1

German, Singapore firms investing in Maynilad

BUSINESS / B2

Jollibee profit grew 27% in '06; store sales up 13.5%

WORLD / A22

North Korea to shut down key nuclear sites in exchange for badly needed fuel

NEWS/ A2

Gov't agrees to sell 46% stake in PLDT stock

NEWS/ A2

Pacquiao says he'll quit boxing if he wins election

Lovers watch out, cops watching you

DAPAT MAY DANGAL ANG PAGMAMAHAL

POLICE WERE GIVEN additional orders for Valentine's Day: Be on alert for overly enthusiastic affection in public places.

Police director for operations Wilfredo Garcia on Wednesday instructed offi-

LOVERS/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, February 15, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 69 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

9 suspected NPA hired guns nabbed in Laguna

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE ARrested on Tuesday night nine suspected guns for hire of the communist New People's Army (NPA) while on their way home from a failed mission to allegedly assassinate two candidates for mayor in Cagayan province.

9 SUSPECTED/ A10

Palace refuses to give copy of Melo report

Ermita: Findings still not complete

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG HAS REFUSED TO FURNISH THE European Union and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' special rapporteur a copy of the findings of the Melo Commission, insisting that the report on extrajudicial killings was still incomplete.

The report, which has yet to be made public, linked some of the killings of leftist activists to the military, particularly retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan. President Macapagal-Arroyo formed the Melo Commission, which is chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, in August 2006.

Both the EU and UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston have asked the Palace for a copy of the report.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday said at his regular weekly briefing that the commission's report was just "a preliminary report" and "by no means complete."

He reminded reporters that Ms Arroyo had earlier directed the Melo Commission "to continue with its work."

Short of saying that the report was one-sided, Ermita pointed out that vital "resource persons" other than military and police officials had not accepted the commission's invitation to attend its hearings.

The families of those killed, as well as members of militant

PALACE/ A17

Palace goal: Cut House impeach numbers

By Norman Bordadora

THE ADMINISTRATION COALITION has adopted a strategy to defeat reelectionist and new members of the House of Representatives who may seek to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo in the incoming 14th Congress.

The opposition needs one-third or at least 79 seats in the House to automatically transmit to the Senate a third impeachment case against Ms Arroyo.

The Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) have agreed to field a common candidate against opposition members of the House, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, said yesterday.

Villafuerte noted that those who voted for the impeachment in 2005 numbered 51 while those who did in 2006 dwindled to just 32.

"That 32 will also be reduced substantially as many of them are three-termers who can no longer run for their old seats in the House," he said.

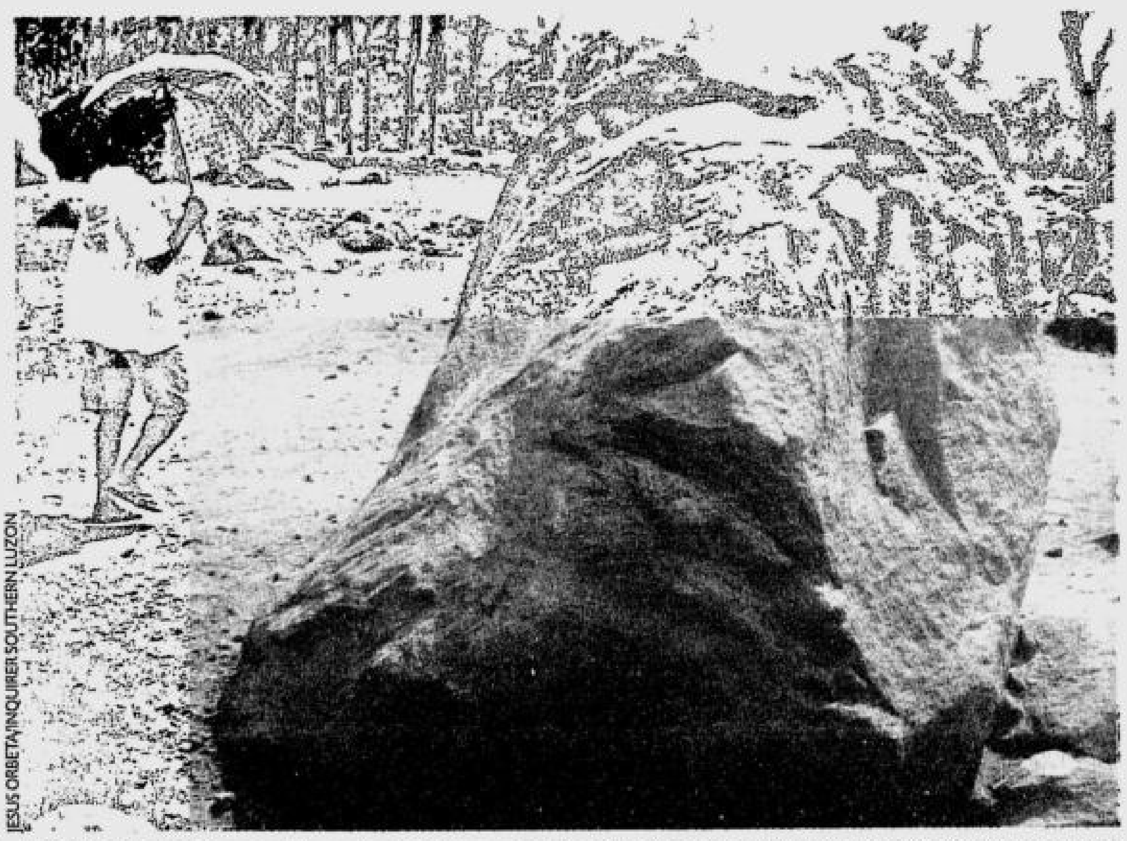
He said the goal of the administration coalition was "to defeat half of that 32."

"(Keeping the opposition from the House) is not the objective," Villafuerte said.

But it's but fair to work for the anti-Arroyo forces' defeat, he said.

The President's supporters in the House defeated attempts at

PALACE GOAL/ A4


JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

FINDING A FACE in a rock formation in Barangay Maipon in Guinobatan, Albay, where more than 200 perished to torrents of sand and boulders from the slopes of Mt. Mayon at the height of Supertyphoon "Reming."

Devastated Albay towns stirring back to life

By Jocelyn R. Uy

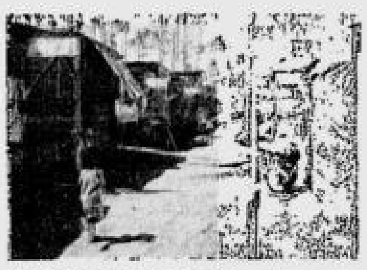
(First of three parts)

SOME TOWNS OF ALBAY THAT Supertyphoon "Reming" ruthlessly brought to grief and near emptiness last Nov. 30 are stirring back to life.

Streets have been cleared of toppled trees and broken billboards, roofs have been fixed, the rough terrain of mud and boulders where once there were paved roads is being flattened. And green is again coloring the forlorn mountains.

Vendors are back on the streets of Legazpi City. Mornings, cars engage in a perky honking anthem as throngs of students head to their classes. (Schools opened early in January even as evacuees continue to camp outside and major repairs have yet to be completed.)

SPECIAL REPORT
Project Editor
Rosario A. Garcellano


MMDA VILLAGE: Transit center for 1,800 evacuees.

But in the secluded districts, where the effects of Reming's fury are still evident, women gather under the trees exchanging stories as they wait for food rations. The menfolk, idled from farming with their land buried under Mount Mayon's volcanic debris, busy themselves in carpentry work.

In government offices, provincial and local officials and volunteer members of nongovernment

DEVASTATED/ A8

Believers see 'sad image of Christ' on rock

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

GUINOBATAN, ALBAY—A boulder bearing what believers claim is a "sad image of Jesus Christ" is drawing the young and old alike to a village here.

Villagers last week found the rock in Barangay Maipon, which lost more than 200 people to torrents of sand and boulders loosened from the slopes of Mt. Mayon when Supertyphoon "Reming" hit the province on Nov. 29.

Reming left more than 1,200 people dead or missing in Albay.

Elen Isip, 44, a resident of the village, said the boulder carried a timely message.

"Many of us have forgotten Him and only remember Him when a calamity comes. We seldom pray or thank Him for His everyday blessings. Many also indulge in too many

BELIEVERS/ A8

24 freed Pinoys coming home

By Michael Lim Ubac

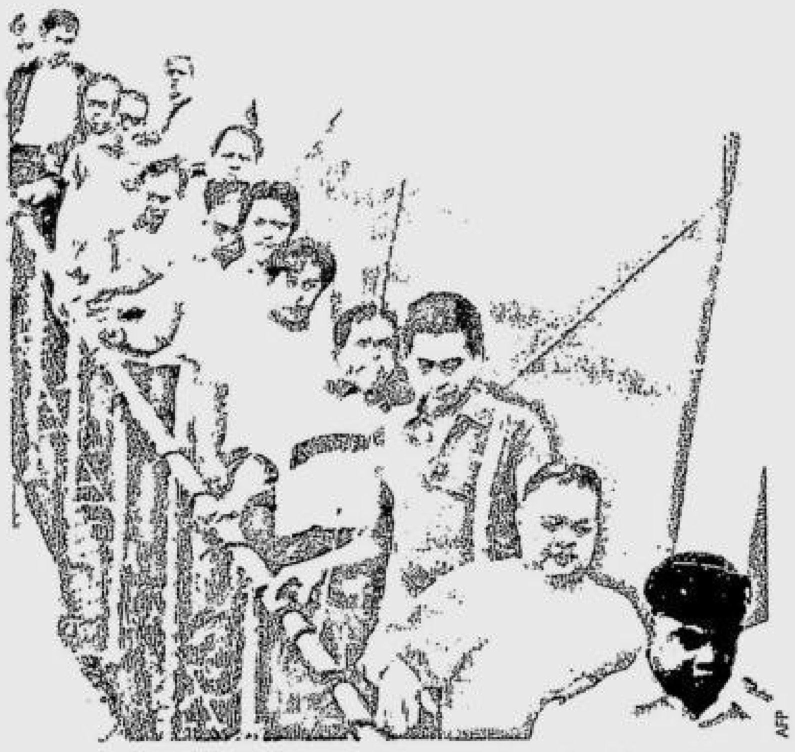
THE 24 FILIPINO SEAMEN FREED on Tuesday by kidnappers in Nigeria's restive oil region will return to Manila over the weekend, President Macapagal-Arroyo announced yesterday.

"I am glad to learn that the released ship crew are all well and may soon be reunited with their families," the President said at the induction rites of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"I would like to personally thank Nigerian President Obasanjo for taking a direct hand in the release of our nationals even as I pray for the eventual release of those still held," she said.

The seamen were seized on Jan. 20 by gunmen from a Nigerian-flagged, German-owned cargo ship Baco-Liner 2 off the coast of Nigeria. *(List of names of seamen on Page A10.)*

24 FREED/ A10


AFP

ALMOST HOME: The 24 Filipino hostages released and ferried from their place of captivity are scheduled to arrive on Saturday.

Leyte survivors discover love among ruins

By Jani Arnaiz
Inquirer Visayas

NEW GUINSAUGON, ST. BERNARD, Southern Leyte—When she lost her husband to the landslide that wiped out her village on Feb. 17 last year, the thought of finding love again never crossed her mind.

But Neria Bernalez, 50, did find love in Modesto Libaton, 47, a neighbor in her old village of Guinsaugon who had lost his wife in the same tragedy. They were married yesterday, on the Day of Hearts.

After the landslide, Neria and Modesto

LEYTE/ A10

LYN RILLON

MAIDEN VOYAGE
DOTC Secretary Leandro Mendoza briefs the No. 1 passenger, President Arroyo, together with Agustin Bengzon, chair of the DOTC's Pasig River Ferry Project and now president of NDC Maritime Leasing Corp. (Right) Sailing down the Pasig in air-conditioned comfort.

EZ2
17 11

FOUR DIGIT
1 2 0 0

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
0 7 6 | 9 6 7
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
19 22 27 30 37 38
P15,117,280.20

Second
FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while the eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will have cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/14/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Gov't agrees to sell PLDT stock

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY AGREED TO SELL ITS 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC), which indirectly owns telecoms giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone, to Metro Pacific Asset Holdings for P25.2 billion.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the government and Metro Pacific, the Manila-based unit of First Pacific Group of Hong Kong, yesterday signed the sale and purchase agreement covering the government's 111,415 shares in PTIC which shall be transferred to Metro Pacific upon full payment.

"We are hopeful that we will be able to complete this transaction soon so that our people can benefit right away from the additional revenues that will be raised from this asset sale," Teves said.

The sale of the government's PTIC shares is expected to substantially boost government's revenues for 2007, when fiscal authorities are targeting to limit the budget deficit to only P63 billion.

PTIC holds a 14 percent stake in PLDT. The 46 percent holding of the government in PTIC is equivalent to a 6.4 stake in PLDT.

Under the deal, Metro Pacific must place P12.6 billion in an escrow account to cover half the full payment, which falls due on March 8.

Teves said "it is only upon full payment of the shares that we will be able to conclude this transaction."

Should Metro Pacific fail to deliver the full payment by March 8 the deal is off and the shares will be awarded to Singapore's Parallax Venture Fund, said Finance Undersecretary John Sevilla.

"In the event that Metro Pacific does not pay by March 8, the SPA will terminate and the right to match will expire," the official said.

Parallax, which submitted the highest bid for the shares at a public auction last December, had offered a bid that prices PLDT at P2,100 per share.

But First Pacific had the right to match the bid because it has a majority stake in PITC which holds the government's PLDT shares.

First Pacific already owns 54 percent of PTIC and is currently the biggest shareholder in PLDT with a 24 percent stake. By buying the government's 46 percent stake, First Pacific will fully own PTIC and get an additional 6.4 percent stake in PLDT.

In a filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, First Pacific said Tuesday it would exercise its right to match the P25.2 billion bid from Parallax on or before March 2, after obtaining approval from its shareholders at a special meeting on Feb. 28.

The government auctioned the PTIC shares in November after the Supreme Court awarded them to the state as part of a long-running legal battle to recover wealth illegally amassed by late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Parallax Venture Fund, a unit of Singapore-based private equity firm Parallax Capital Management, won the bidding.

PLDT, Philippines' most valuable listed firm with a market cap of nearly $9.8 billion, accounts for three-quarters of First Pacific's operating profit.

PLDT shares gained 3.22 percent to P2,565 pesos yesterday. *With AFP, Reuters*

Gonzalez: Salonga cited wrong law

By Michael Lim Ubac and Leila B. Salaverria

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had every right to occupy his Cabinet seat even as Gonzalez himself said that former Senate President Jovito Salonga was incorrect in saying that he has been overstaying.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita clarified that Gonzalez was not serving in an acting capacity.

He said Gonzalez was appointed ad interim, that is, he is serving temporarily or for the time being.

He pointed out that a Cabinet official and other appointees to the Executive Department can carry on with their jobs for as long as they enjoy the confidence of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

He said there was nothing in the law that says the President cannot re-appoint any official bypassed by the congressional Commission on Appointments.

"It's the prerogative of the President," he said, adding that appointees sit in the Cabinet "at the pleasure of the President."

He said Ms Arroyo considered competence in making any appointment and "the President has confidence in Secretary Raul Gonzalez."

Ermita said the appointments of Gonzalez and several others who were bypassed by the Commission on Appointments when Congress adjourned last week would be extended.

Gonzalez said Salonga cited the wrong law when the latter questioned Gonzalez's continued stint as justice secretary even after being repeatedly bypassed by the Commission on Appointments.

Salonga said this was in violation of Executive Order 292 which says that appointments in an acting capacity should not exceed one year. Gonzalez was appointed in 2004.

Gonzalez said EO 292 which Salonga cited referred to designations, which he said were not covered by the Commission on Appointments.

Pacquiao says he'll quit boxing if he wins election

By Aquiles Zonio, *Inquirer Mindanao,* **Christian Esguerra and Gil Cabacungan Jr.**

BOXING CHAMPION MANny Pacquiao will retire from boxing if he wins a congressional seat in May.

"If the law says so, then I am ready to leave boxing if I win and just focus on public service," Pacquiao said in an interview with reporters in General Santos City.

The 28-year-old World Boxing Council international super-featherweight champion, a former baker and construction worker, said he would seek the first congressional district seat in his South Cotabato province.

The district, composed of General Santos City and the towns of Polomolok, Tupi and Tampakan, is represented by oppositionist Darlene Antonino-Custodio.

"Perhaps I can become a bridge that will bring my district closer to the national government," said Pacquiao who is running under the pro-administration wing of the Liberal Party headed by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

To suggestions that he was instigated by Malacañang to run, Pacquiao said it was his personal decision and nobody was dictating on him.

South Cotabato Gov. Daisy Fuentes, another oppositionist, criticized the administration for nominating a supposed "incompetent" like Pacquiao.

Meanwhile, the two political leaders being blamed for Pacquiao's jump into politics yesterday said they were asking the champion to reconsider his decision.

Atienza said that Pacquiao's decision to run was "not yet final."

And if it were up to him, Atienza said he would prefer that Pacquiao concentrate on boxing, particularly on his coming bout with an undefeated Mexican slugger in the United States in April.

"Politics can wait. Right now, he's at the peak of his boxing career. So the sooner that he drops all this political talk, the better for him," said Atienza who said he regards Pacquiao as a son.

Fans have criticized Atienza and outgoing Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, a senatorial aspirant, for allegedly using Pacquiao's immense popularity and charisma for their political interest.

Singson, a long-time patron of Pacquiao, said Pacquiao should not yet jump from the boxing ring to the Batasan because "he has yet to reach his peak in his career."

Darlene won't go for a TKO

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DIMINUTIVE REELECTIONist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio yesterday said she will not seek for the disqualification of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao in his bid to win a seat in Congress representing the first district of South Cotabato.

This as doubts about Pacquiao's residency in General Santos hovered following his declaration on Monday to run for congressman under the pro-administration wing of the Liberal Party.

Pacquiao filed his certificate of residency in Manila last year, spawning rumors that Manila Mayor Lito Atienza was prodding him to run as vice mayor under his son, Ali Atienza.

However, Custodio said she has no intentions of working for Pacquiao's disqualification.

"I acknowledge that he is a resident of General Santos. He is a katutubong Gensan... It's all legal technicality which will have to be threshed out as well, anyway, by the lawyers and the Comelec (Commission on Elections)," she told reporters yesterday.

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Filipino cop's heroism at Ground Zero doubted

NEW YORK—A NEW YORK POLICE OFFICER whose death last month from lung disease received wide attention did not rush to the World Trade Center after the Sept. 11 attacks, as previously reported, The New York Times reported Tuesday.

Officer Cesar A. Borja also was never formally assigned to rubble removal duties at Ground Zero, and did not work a shift in the area until December 2001, the newspaper said.

Borja, who emigrated to the US from the Philippines, worked traffic and security posts on the streets around the site, the newspaper said. There is also no record he worked 16 hours in a shift, the newspaper reported, citing Borja's own memo book.

Media accounts implying that Borja worked long hours breathing toxic dust while not wearing protective gear brought political and media attention to the plight of Sept. 11 first responders and led President George W. Bush to say he was eager to see money directed toward their medical treatment. The same details became the focus of a letter Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton wrote to Bush seeking more federal money for the ailing workers.

Borja's widow insisted Tuesday that the core of her husband's story remains unquestioned: In the months after the attacks, he worked several shifts within a few blocks of the World Trade Center rubble at a time when the air still smelled of dust and debris.

"My husband was still exposed. He worked there for 220 hours in total ... He was exposed, and that's what matters," Eva Borja told WCBS-TV.

His son, Ceasar Borja Jr., said he remained convinced that his father spent at least some time working directly on the rubble pile.

"I know it for sure, from eyewitness accounts," he said. "The whole argument of it being September or December, who cares? The basics is that my father was there, and he passed away. That my father was exposed to the dust and the toxic air."

In Washington, Clinton said none of the new details had changed her view of Borja's case.

"I believe that everyone who worked, volunteered, or was exposed to Ground Zero, whether it was for days, weeks or months, deserves our support and our help," Clinton said Tuesday.

The Times traces the misimpression about Borja's role to a story in the Daily News, which has championed ailing first responders editorially and even paid for Borja's son to fly to Washington, D.C., to be a guest of Clinton at Bush's State of the Union address. Ceasar Borja Jr. later met with Bush in Manhattan.

Jennifer Mauer, a spokeswoman for the Daily News, defended the newspaper's coverage of Borja. "We never said he was down there before December 2001," she said in a statement. "We did report that he 'rushed to Ground Zero and started working long days there—even volunteering to work extra shifts.' That is still true." AP

Comelec 'techies' junk automation

By Nikko Dizon

CITING THE DANGERS OF COMPUTER HACKing, the technical advisory council of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) thumbed down the partial automation of elections this May.

In a six-page resolution, the council decided not to recommend the computerization of elections in 12 pilot sites this year, as provided in a new law signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo last month.

In a press briefing yesterday afternoon, Council spokesperson Lorenzo Formoso III explained that an automated election system (AES) provider, the Comelec itself, and voter and other electoral stakeholders would not be ready to implement the automation law so soon.

Formoso added that "bad things could happen" if automation pushes through without proper product development and testing, referring to computer hacking and even electronic cheating.

The resolution was signed by CICT chair and advisory council head, Ramon Sales, Science and Technology undersecretary Fortunato de la Peña, Renato Garcia of the Philippine Electronic and Telecommunications Federation, Inc., Gonzalo Catan Jr. of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, Andie Lasala of the Consortium on Electoral Reforms, and Ivan John Uy of the Philippine Computer Society.

Two other members, Lilia Guillermo of the Chief Information Officers Forum Inc., and Manuel Ramos Jr., of the University of the Philippines were not present during yesterday's meeting.

The new law, crafted at the Senate by Sen. Richard Gordon's committee on electoral reform, seeks to amend the current automation law, RA 8436, by authorizing the use of an AES in the voting, counting, consolidation, canvassing and transmission of results and other electoral processes in 12 test areas this year.

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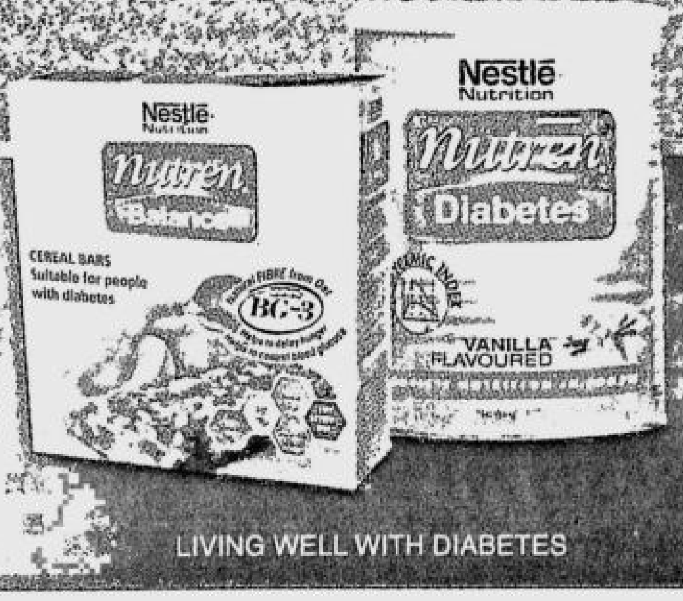

LIVING WELL WITH DIABETES

INQUIRER

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

Goodbye Lipo, Hello Ultrashape!

Ultrashape – Lipo Without The Suction continues to make waves in the slimming industry since its official launch in Manila early last year. Tagged as the first non-invasive breakthrough in body contouring, Ultrashape uses an ultrasound beam to breakdown and liquefy fats from outside the body. Promising an average reduction of about 2cm in just one treatment, it effectively reduces fat deposits on multiple body areas such as the tummy, flanks and thighs.

A small amount of fat reduction is just not worth undergoing surgery for. Liposuction usually involves massive body contouring, and is often not recommended when only a few inches of fat have to be removed. Thus, for the majority of people who only need a few touch-ups, Ultrashape offers a much safer alternative. It gives the benefits of liposuction without the risks or side effects, surgical scars and downtime. The result: Smooth, even and shapely curves you can flaunt even without your clothes on!

Due to its increasing popularity, demand for Ultrashape is high often resulting to fully booked appointment schedules from its growing roster of clients. These women have testified – they have finally found the best alternative to liposuction!

Dawn Zulueta-Lagdameo, 37

"When Ultrashape was offered to me, I was excited! Ultrashape concentrates on that last hard-to-lose fat that remains in your body even after you've lost weight. I told myself, at last, there was a chance to lose all that stubborn fat that just wouldn't seem to go away. The doctor explained that Ultrashape destroys the fat cells in the targeted areas like my stomach and thighs. From there, the fat is metabolized and burned naturally by my body as energy. The treatment takes an hour and a half and is done once a month.

Ultrashape is really the perfect finishing touch for people like me who have lost weight but still have some lumps and bumps. After my first treatment, I immediately said to myself 'wow, it's perfect!' Ultrashape definitely has all the benefits of lipo minus the surgery and all the risks! There's no downtime whatsoever. So you see, liposuction is unnecessary."

Lyn Ching-Pascual, 34

"What intrigued me about Ultrashape is the claim – the easy treatment you can have in your lunch break. Apart from that, a friend of mine said that her friend tried Ultrashape as soon as it came out in the market. And she immediately lost 2 inches in just one month! Ultrashape promises an average of about 2cm, that's true, but it's also possible for someone to lose even more than that too. That's why for me, even if liposuction was the only weight-loss treatment available, I'd rather walk up a building 100 times than have an operation because I don't want the possibility of dying for vanity.

With Ultrashape around, everyone now gets a better slimming option. Since it's non-invasive, I've got nothing to worry about. After trying it firsthand, I was like 'is this real?!' I just walked in, got the treatment and after an hour, I was on my way back to work again! It's as if nothing happened. The best part was, I could feel my tummy flatten only after a few weeks! No doubt it's the perfect way to trim down excess fats!"

Cristina Gonzalez-Romualdez, 42

"Nothing really compares to Ultrashape. When I tried it, I immediately lost 4cm in my tummy after only 1 session! Imagine what a couple of sessions more can do! Diet pills and crash dieting don't work for me. With my catering and events business, I can't just turn my back from tasting and savoring my own menus. More so, if it's lipo we're going to compare Ultrashape with, lipo doesn't even come close to it as far as safety is concerned. Besides, with Ultrashape around, why would anyone still want to settle for liposuction?! I must be very desperate or I must be so fat that I could no longer move before I'd consider getting it done. I just find it too dangerous!"

Undeniably, Marie France's Ultrashape is solid proof that the trends in slimming now slant towards the approach that's safer yet as effective. After going through a weight-loss program, it is highly recommended to continue with Ultrashape treatments right after. It's the best final touch-up in getting rid of remaining stubborn fats in the body. For booking schedules, call Marie France now at 894-BODY (2639).

ADVT

UNO shrugs off guest bets' half-baked loyalty

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Dona Pazzibugan and and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE UNITED OPPOSITION IS SHRUGGING off the administration's claim that Senators Manuel Villar and Francis Pangilinan's half-baked allegiance to the UNO would undermine the opposition in the May elections.

"No matter what, we in the opposition are committed as we have committed to include them in our campaign. It is not a question of them committed to the cause of the opposition or not," said Sen. Panfilo Lacson, an UNO senatorial candidate.

Villar and Pangilinan agreed to being guest senatorial candidates of the UNO but they clearly set themselves apart from the group by insisting that they were not obliged to join the rest of the team during the campaign.

Lacson said the UNO was taking these statements nonchalantly, claiming that these have not affected Villar and Pangilinan's standing in the team.

"We don't mind them campaigning for themselves. We will still endorse and we will still carry their names. They deserve goodwill from the opposition for not joining the administration," said Lacson.

Independence from Palace

Lacson spoke of the independence shown by Villar and Pangilinan during the bitter dispute between the Palace and the Senate last year over issues like the declaration of a state of emergency, the calibrated preemptive response and Executive Order No. 464, which barred the appearance of Cabinet and military officials in Congress without the President's consent.

Pangilinan stuck to his decision to run as an independent as the campaign got under way.

"While I am thankful that I am adopted by the UNO ticket, I hope it will understand that I am more comfortable in maintaining my independent stance because I believe I am more effective as an independent (candidate)," he said.

He said he had already laid out his campaign schedule under the assumption that he would do it alone.

Silent support

UNO president and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said the group would have to talk with Pangilinan, who reportedly promised maverick Sen. Joker Arroyo and Sen. Ralph Recto his "silent" support.

Arroyo and Recto, members of the Wednesday Group like Villar, are running under the administration's Team Unity.

"We will not remove him from the slate because he has been adopted. We will just clarify with him the mechanics of the campaign," Binay told reporters at a press conference in the Makati City Hall.

Pangilinan said he had no plans of joining the opposition's proclamation rally in Makati on Friday.

"We'll see, we'll see. We have to check the schedules," he told reporters while touring the Balintawak Market in Caloocan City.

Team Unity rally in Cebu

On Saturday, President Macapagal-Arroyo is scheduled to lead Team Unity in its proclamation rally in Cebu City.

Team Unity campaign manager Reli German said the administration ticket decided to fire the opening salvo in Cebu because it was a big supporter of the President.

The proclamation rally will be held at around 2 p.m. at the New Cebu Coliseum in Cebu City.

Coup plotters

Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay took potshots at the opposition's Grand Coalition, calling the slate one made up of "active destabilizers and coup plotters."

Pichay, a senatorial candidate of Team Unity, identified the opposition's adopted candidate, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes, as a coup leader.

Pichay challenged the opposition to present a report on what it had achieved in terms of moving the economy forward and improving the people's standard of living.

"It would be short and empty because they have not done anything at all in these areas," Pichay said.

Real issues

Adel Tamano, campaign spokesperson for the opposition senatorial ticket, said the opposition enjoyed an advantage over Malacañang's senatorial slate because it could bring the "real issues" to the people.

"We are not afraid of the people. We will go straight to them and we believe that they will [readily] embrace our candidates," Tamano said in the Makati City Hall.

Tamano said the Team Unity decision to resort to local government officials to campaign for its senatorial slate showed how much the administration was scared of facing the people while issues of "lying, cheating and stealing" were unsolved. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*

Palace goal: Cut . . .

From page A1

impeaching her in 2005 and 2006.

In the impeachment complaints, the opposition accused Ms Arroyo of stealing the presidential election in 2004 and of committing other illegal acts.

The opposition considers the midterm local and national elections on May 14 as a referendum on Ms Arroyo.

"In areas where the incumbent is a member of the opposition, we will strive harder to come up with a common candidate," Villafuerte said.

Loyalty

The administration coalition, which also includes the Nationalist People's Coalition and the Liberal Party wing of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, has formed an arbitration committee to resolve conflicts among supporters of Ms Arroyo.

"If there are more than one possible (administration) candidates we (in the arbitration committee) will choose one among them based on the criteria of 'winnability' and loyalty," Villafuerte said.

He said a loyal administration candidate should be consistently supportive of the President for some time.

"Even without this arbitration process, I doubt if the opposition can seat 79 congressmen after the elections," the Kampi president said.

The Team Unity senatorial slate of the administration is seeking to take the "unity process" down to the congressional districts, provinces and towns to ensure the victory of candidates supportive of the President.

Equity of incumbent

Speaker Jose de Venecia, president of Lakas-CMD, and Villafuerte said 80 percent of the conflicts among possible candidates of the coalition had been ironed out.

Coalition leaders have adopted the "equity-of-the-incumbent" rule in which incumbent officials of parties belonging to the coalition automatically become the common candidates of the coalition, De Venecia and Villafuerte said in separate pronouncements.

"This breakthrough agreement at the top-level arbitration committee has ensured cohesion and unity in the coalition three months before the national and local elections," De Venecia said in a statement.

He said the arbitration committee would meet regularly to resolve the remaining conflicts and to ensure the victory of administration candidates.

"The role of the coalition leaders is to ensure that the conflicts do not raise obstacles that would dampen the chances of coalition candidates," De Venecia said.

The arbitration committee is made up of De Venecia and Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan of Lakas; Villafuerte and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno of Kampi; Rizal Rep. Michael John Duavit of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson of the Liberal Party-Atienza wing; and Aurora Rep. Juan Edgardo Angara and former Negros Oriental Rep. Miguel Romero of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

Squabbling

In areas where there will be squabbling among members of the administration coalition, the opposition will still get a whipping, Villafuerte said.

"These are areas wherein the opposition is already so irrelevant that we might just let the squabbling members of the coalition to just fight each other out in the elections," he said.

In areas where the incumbents are on their final terms, the arbitration committee has agreed to pick the common candidates based on the recommendations of the outgoing incumbents, endorsements by city or district chairs of the parties, and the stature and popularity of the aspirants.

Corrections

IN THE FEB. 14 issue, a Page A2 headline—"Singapore PM here for state visit"—and the caption for its accompanying photo misstated the designation of a visiting leader from Singapore. Sellapan Rama Nathan is the president—not prime minister—of Singapore.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, the "Pinoy Kasi" column by Michael Tan on Page A15—"Heart Center at 32"—misspelled the first name of one of the celebrity cardiac surgeons who attended the inauguration of the Philippine Heart Center for Asia. He is South African surgeon Christiaan—not Christian—Barnard, the one who performed the first human-to-human heart transplant.

* * *

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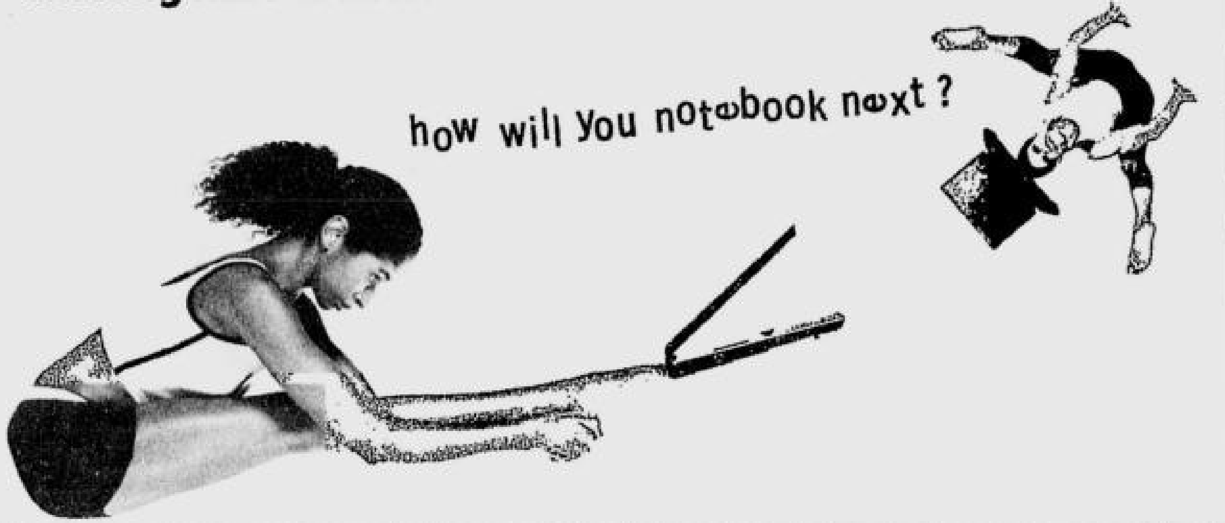
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3 groups agree on poll quick count

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS' MOVEMENT FOR Free Elections, the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' National Secretariat for Social Action yesterday agreed to come out with a single quick count of the results of the the May 14 polls, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said yesterday.

"We can only accredit one nongovernment organization because there is only one copy of the election return set aside for the quick count," Abalos said in a press conference, after a meeting with representatives of the three groups.

He said Namfrel, Nassa and PPCRV were instructed to come out with "working arrangements" to implement a single quick count. *Jerome Aning*

Jose Morillo Sison; 55

JOSE "LITO" MORILLO SISON OF UP VILLAGE, Diliman, Quezon City and formerly of Kamuning, QC, died yesterday at age 55.

He was survived by wife Scholastica "Honey" Reyno Sison and children Joyce, Jennie, Jophie, Jhette, Jevee and Jam; grandchildren Chin-chin and Jakob; and in-laws Alvin Calleja, Mike Aromin and Volt Contreras.

His remains lie at the Ascension Chapel, Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (beside Claret School) on Mahinhin cor. Mayumi Streets, UP Village, QC. Interment will be announced later.

Sr. Praeclara Lazaro; 91

SISTER PRAECLARA LAZARO DIED ON Wednesday, Feb. 13, at the age of 91. Her body lies at Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit on Poinsettia St., Quezon City.

She will be laid to rest at the Christ the King Cemetery tomorrow (Friday) after the 3 p.m. Mass at the convent chapel.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, February 15, 2007
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	**Gen 9:1-13**
Gospel:	**Mark 8:27-33**

Jesus set out with his disciples for the villages around Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" And they told him, "Some say you are John the Baptist; others say you are Elijah or one of the prophets."

Then Jesus asked them, "But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." And he ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus then began to teach them that the Son of Man had to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. He would be killed and after three days rise again. Jesus said all this quite openly, so that Peter took him aside and began to protest strongly. But Jesus turning around, and looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter saying, "Get behind me Satan! You are thinking, not as God does, but as people do."

Commentary

Again God gives Noah and his sons all the earth to enjoy, use and care for, but they are not to eat flesh or take flesh with blood in it—a decree against killing anyone, any animal. God will take into account all human life we take. A new covenant is given to Noah and to the earth and all creation. The sign of this is the rainbow, the arch between sky and ground—the earth will not be destroyed by God.

Jesus questions his own on who others think he is—a prophet. And then on who we think he is. The answer comes from Peter first, who says he is the Messiah. But Peter is ordered strictly not to say that to anyone! Jesus begins to tell them who he is: the Son of Man who will be crucified, rejected, and handed over. But the disciples want no part in it—beginning with Peter who has his own ideas (like us) on who he wants Jesus to be. And Jesus rebukes us all telling us to stop hindering his way and stop judging like the world. We must learn the sight and the wisdom of God, which is the cross.

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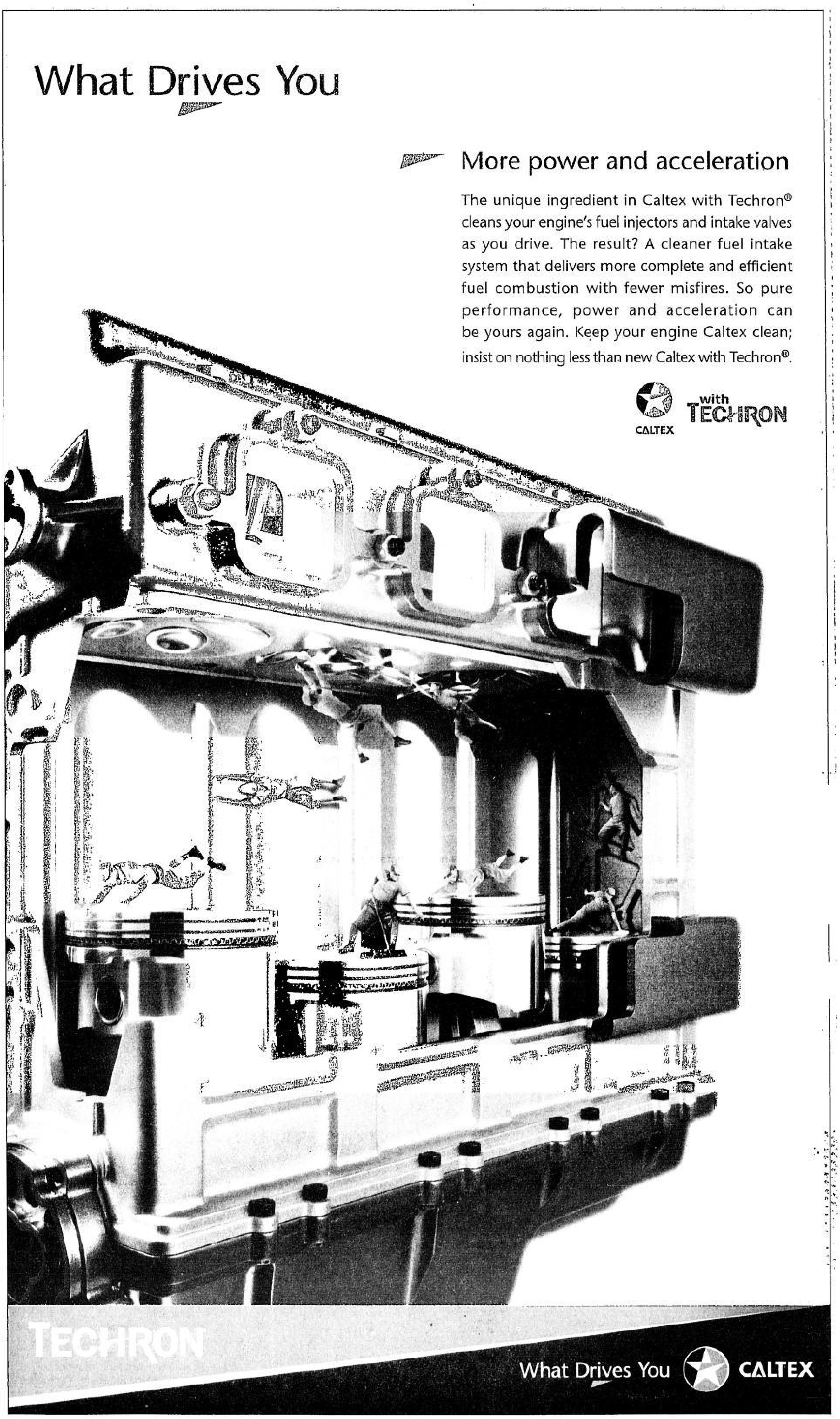

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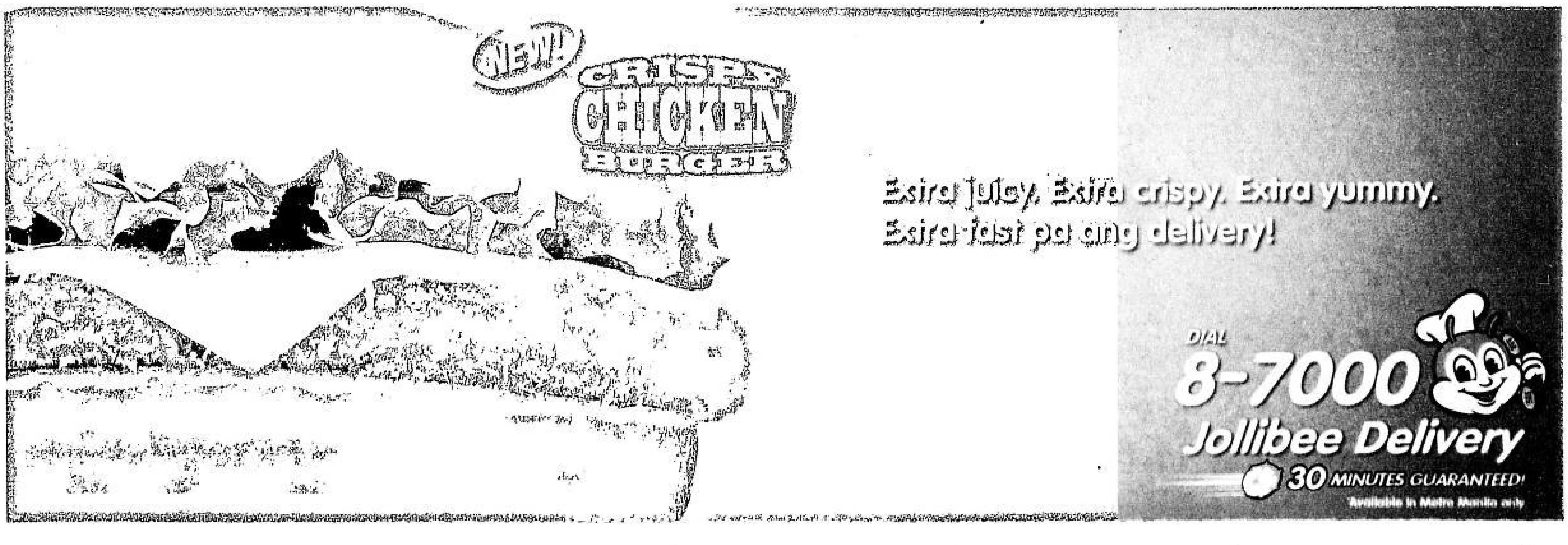
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Enforce rule on posters, Comelec orders cops, barangay execs

By Jerome Aning and Nikko Dizon

COMELEC CHAIR BENJAMIN Abalos Sr. yesterday threatened to dismiss and slap administrative charges on police chiefs and barangay officials who turn a blind eye to the illegal posting of campaign materials in their areas of jurisdiction.

Abalos ordered Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon to issue a memorandum circular directing all police district and station chiefs to enforce strict compliance with election rules governing the posting, display or exhibition of any election campaign or propaganda materials.

He recommended that administrative action be taken against the officer in charge of the area in which the campaign materials are found.

Abalos said he would ask Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to issue similar warnings against barangay officials who allow the illegal proliferation of campaign materials in their areas.

The Comelec, meanwhile, has warned re-electionist senators Francisco Pangilinan and Panfilo Lacson about the proliferation of their campaign materials in certain parts of Metro Manila.

Abalos said this was in violation of the Fair Elections Act and could become grounds for disqualification.

"We want to be fair to everybody," said Abalos, adding that his attention was drawn to the two candidates' possible violation of the election law.

Abalos said he saw this for himself, noting that on his way to work the other day he saw that there were just too many campaign posters of the two senatorial bets of the United Opposition (UNO) in Sta. Mesa and San Juan.

100 pairs married in swamp

PUERTO PRINCESA—Standing ankle-deep in swamp mud, 100 couples wed in an unusual Valentine's Day ceremony here yesterday, dubbed "Love Affair with Nature."

The barefoot couples, dressed in white, stood in the swamp facing the sea and exchanged vows in a sunrise ceremony officiated by the city mayor.

"You will be an example of true love not just to your partner but to the environment," Mayor Edward Hagedorn said in a short speech after marrying the mostly poor farming couples.

Hagedorn said the environmental program is the city's unique way of celebrating Valentine's Day and promoting their environment advocacy.

The official ceremony was free of charge for the couples in exchange for planting mangrove saplings in the swamp and helping further to protect their island.

Since 2003, this strange combination of environmentalism, romance and aid to the poor has become an annual event in Puerto Princesa which has been pushing an image of cleanliness and ecological activism to attract tourists to Palawan.

Not too late

For 72-year-old farmer Protacio de Ocampo, the free ceremony was a chance to make official his relationship with 67-year-old partner Teofela Apolinario.

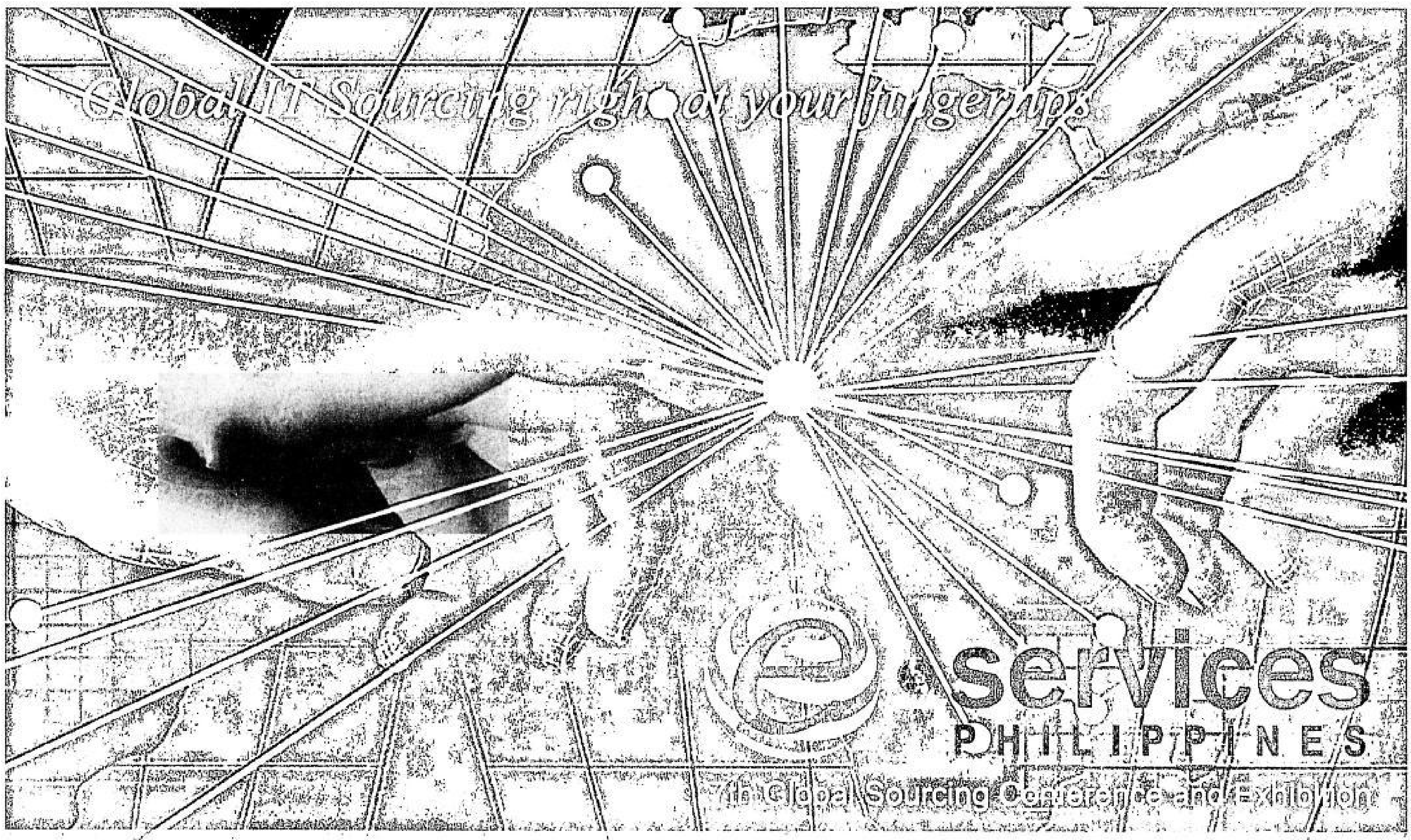
The pair have been together since 1958 but De Ocampo has been too embarrassed to approach officials to arrange a traditional wedding because he is illiterate and could not sign the marriage license.

"It would be embarrassing if they passed away without getting married. At least now we know that their union would be recognized in heaven," said their daughter Leonora Apolinario, 48, who witnessed the mass wedding along with her daughter and some 3,000 other guests, including tourists.

Josephine Rodriguez, 27, wearing a dress she borrowed from her partner's aunt, said she was thankful for the ceremony as she and her construction worker husband could not afford a private one.

"Maybe later when we have money we can have a private wedding," said the mother-of-one who spent most of the ceremony trying to keep her dress out of the mud.

She said she understood the importance of the mangrove swamp, which serves as a nursery and habitat for small fish and anchors the fragile soil on the shore to prevent erosion. *Jerry Esplanada and AFP*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Keynote

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PART II:
STAYING COMPETITIVE IN THE GLOBAL SOURCING MARKET
Case Studies: BPO Best Practices
- Build-Operate-Transfer Business Model
- Wholly-owned Business Model
- Third-party or Vendor Managed Business Model
- Joint-Venture Business Model
Survival of the Focused
The Next Level: Knowledge Process Outsourcing
Five-Year Development Roadmap:
Business Processing Association of the Philippines

DAY 2 | 16 February 2007
8:00 AM - 12:00 NN

BPO-KPO TRACK
Isla Ballroom 2

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Exploring Opportunities in Higher Value BPO
Market Perspective: Financial Services in the UK & Europe
Opportunities in Financial Services - A Case Study
Best Practices in Financial and Accounting Services
Opportunities in Publisher Services

CREATIVE e-SERVICES (DIGITAL ANIMATION) TRACK
Mactan Function Rooms 1 - 2

Overview of Digital Animation Industry
Mobile Animation: The next generation
Opportunities in CG Production for Games
(Production of CG for Games)
The Art of Voice Acting in Animation
Introduction of the Game Developers Association of the Philippines

HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TRACK
Isla Ballroom 1

The Health Information Management Market in the US
Coding and Other Opportunities in the US HIM Market
HIPAA Security Compliance in its Four Focused Areas
eHealth Initiatives in the UK

DAY 2 | 16 February 2007
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

BPO-KPO TRACK
Isla Ballroom 2

Opportunities Design Process Delivery
Best Practices in Design Process Delivery
Opportunities in Legal Outsourcing
Opportunities in Distribution and Logistics

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OUTSOURCING TRACK
Isla Ballroom 1

Trends & Highlights in Global ITO
Regional Cooperation for ITO

PHILIPPINES: OFFSHORE DESTINATION (BUSINESS VENTURE & INVESTMENT TRACK)
Mactan Function Rooms 1 - 2

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PHILIPPINE e-SERVICES ADVANTAGE
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Lafayette restart slammed

By Nikko Dizon and TJ Burgonio

A CATHOLIC BISHOP AND VARIOUS ENVIRONMENT groups have denounced the government's recent decision to allow the resumption of operations of the Australian-operated Lafayette Mining Ltd. in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

"They just don't get it," Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes said in a statement released Monday, insisting that mining in Rapu-Rapu is "inappropriate" and "detrimental" to the environment. *(See related story on page A15)*

"It's heartless," said the head of the militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya.

Members of Pamalakaya staged a protest rally at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources yesterday, highlighted by what they dubbed a "fishapalooza" (a parody of Manila's kissing couples "lovapalooza") where they literally kissed Tilapia fishes goodbye to dramatize their fears.

In 2005, Lafayette Mining was suspended following two mine tailing spills that resulted in cyanide contamination and fish kills.

Bastes said he would hold Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes and Lafayette "responsible for further danger and damage that will occur on the island."

The bishop said he was not convinced by Reyes' assurance that "everything is okay with the mining operations."

The protesters—composed of Rapu-Rapu residents, Church leaders, environment organizations, academicians and scientists—went a step further and wrote the financiers of Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI), urging them to withdraw their investments from the controversial mining project.

The group issued the call to ABN Amro, Standard Chartered, and ANZ, among other financiers of Lafayette.

"Similar or more tragic incidents are highly probable to occur again during or even after the mine-life of the polymetallic mining project and you, as financiers of this project, would be equally accountable as LPI and related companies are," it said in a petition.

Beau Baconguis, media campaigner of Greenpeace, said the world environment group was also saddened by the decision to reopen the mine.

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Thank you.

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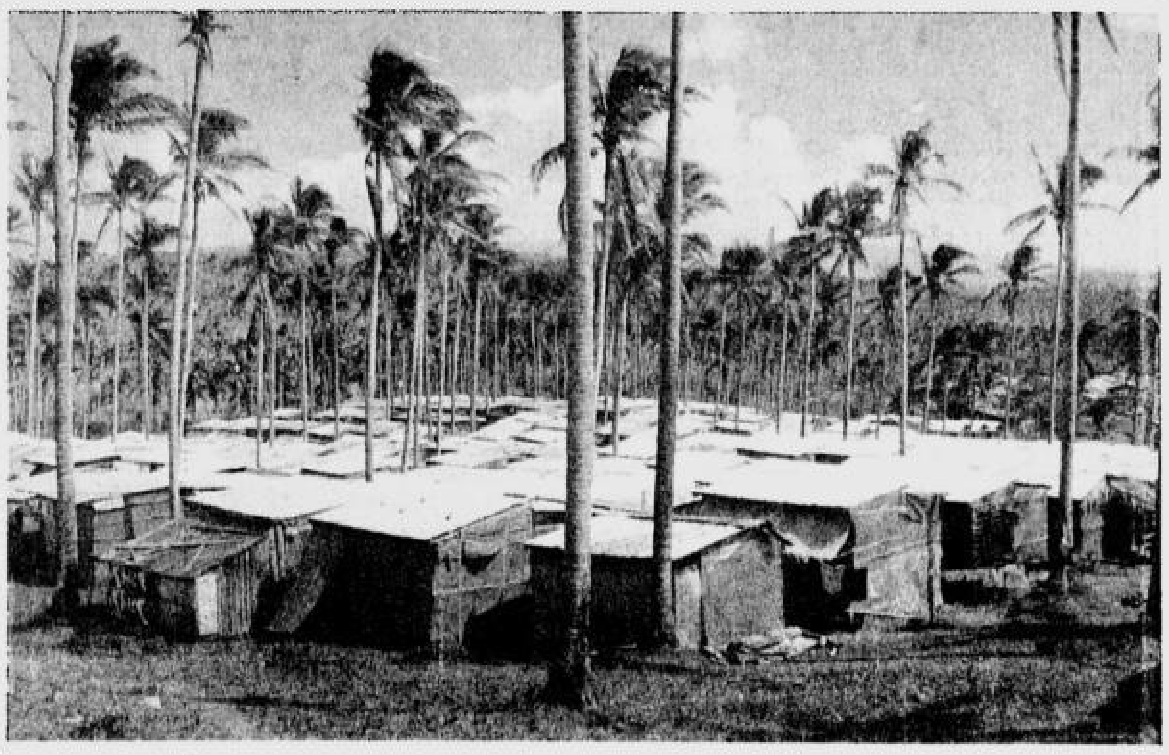
Devastated Albay towns stirring back to life



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THE MMDA VILLAGE in Barangay Taysan (left), made up of 400 shanties, is home now for residents of villages obliterated by Mount Mayon's deadly mudflow. And be it ever so humble, Padang Elementary School (above) has opened its makeshift doors to the children. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

From page A1

organizations continue to assess the inch-by-inch progress of rehabilitation efforts.

"The entire province is in transition as we are now moving toward rehabilitation and slowly phasing out relief operations," Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzales told the INQUIRER late last month.

Recovery programs for livelihood, housing and infrastructure development have been launched, he said. But it will take time for these to turn into economic gains that would eventually give the people a chance to get back on their feet.

"Our programs for rehabilitation will not have an immediate effect," Gonzales conceded.

Hundreds of households in Albay will have to endure more dreary days and nights as only 50 percent of the power supply has been restored. To reach 70 percent, it would take about two more months, the governor estimated.

Teams from about seven power cooperatives are helping the Albay Electric Cooperative, the only one servicing the province, to restore power.

"Our cooperative is bankrupt. Without the [extra help], it would never have been able to restore even 5 percent of power," Gonzales said.

MMDA Village

But the long road to recovery is doubly arduous for those who lost their loved ones, homes and livelihood all at the same time.

More than 1,800 evacuees are being housed at the MMDA Village, which was built by the Metro Manila Development Authority on an 11-hectare government property in Barangay Taysan, a few minutes' drive up and down a mountain off Legazpi's business district.

Similar transit centers are planned in Barangay Anislag, Daraga town (where the local government has allocated nine hectares), Baligang in Camalig (18 hectares), Banao (10 hectares), and Mauraro in Guinobatan (yet undetermined) to shelter other families whose villages were obliterated by mud and huge boulders from Mayon's slopes.

The MMDA also provided the materials for the 400 shanties set out in rows and labeled with wooden signs painted bright pink and blue.

A number of the cramped alleys are named after a city or a town in Metro Manila.

Measuring about 16 square meters, each plastic-and-tarpaulin shanty offers its occupants little comfort from numbing cold at night and blistering heat during the day.

"When the sun is up, our home smells of burnt plastic. I think it's because of the odor that my child has been feeling nauseous for days now," Rowena Arienda said.

Arienda used to live in Barangay Padang in Legazpi, which, along with Malobago, Busay, Binitayan and Culiat in Daraga, and Maipon and San Rafael in Guinobatan—all nestled at the foot of Mayon—has been declared a no man's land.

She is resigned to the idea that she, her husband and their three children cannot return to Padang again, and has tried to give their shelter a semblance of home.

A tattered linoleum serves as a carpet; a piece of plywood (among the few things her husband fished out of the mud) separates the cooking area from an elevated bamboo floor where the family sleeps.

But the Ariendas seem lucky compared to their neighbors, who have only thin sacks to cover the cold, muddy earth or a leaking roof.

20 toilets for 1,000

Jayson Bataller, a volunteer at the city social welfare development office and also an ex-resident of Padang, recounted his family's first few days at the MMDA Village as he took the INQUIRER on a tour of the transit center.

From Gogon Elementary School, where they had sought refuge, they were ferried to Taysan on board Army trucks on Jan. 7.

The village then lacked facilities, he said. They bathed in the open; more than a thousand evacuees shared 20 toilets and three water taps.

According to Dr. Luis Mendoza, the provincial health officer, the ideal ratio is one toilet per 20 persons and one water source per 200.

The London-based donor agency Oxfam funded the construction of 50 more toilets and more than 23 bathrooms, which the evacuees themselves built for minimum pay. Per official records, 183 temporary latrines have been built for the village residents.

To meet the World Health Organization standards on water supply—15 to 20 liters per person daily—Mendoza said fire trucks were delivering water to the village daily.

More water reservoirs are planned for construction to augment the five tanks installed in the area.

Slow death

A number of children and adults have been afflicted with diarrhea, fever, or cold, Bataller said, showing the INQUIRER a stack of complaints from the village residents.

Some blamed the illnesses on the flimsy shelters, others to the reportedly expired relief goods doled out to them. At least two mothers recalled trying to open a can of sardines that suddenly burst, revealing stale contents.

"Sometimes, we think it would be better for us to go back to our homes and die in a disaster than stay here and endure a slow death," Bataller lamented.

But the majority of the residents are trying to create normalcy in unsettled conditions. A number have started small *sari-sari* stores, opening as early as 4 a.m., to sell bread, chips, biscuits and candies.

Apparently missing his farm, a man has planted what appeared like rice in the tiny space separating his shanty from another.

The children have started going to school, walking about a kilometer to get to it.

The women are occupied with the usual chores—heaving buckets of water from down the hill, doing the family laundry, digging small canals, and preparing meals. By noon, the village would smell of weak soap, mud, and urine, marked by a whiff of what's cooking.

It is the farmers who are hard put to establish a routine.

Rudy Alagaban Jr., who used to work the fields from 4 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, has yet to find a job.

Weeks ago, he volunteered to build the toilets for Oxfam for a daily wage of P250. He worked for five days. But after that construction stint, he has spent most of his time puttering around the family shelter.

Now his shanty has a bamboo sliding door, and a bench fashioned from fallen coconut trees stands on his front yard.

"At least now we have a place to hang out at night," he said.

Waiting for relief

But Billy Alcantara finds himself sleeping away his idle time, which is most of the time.

Like Alagaban, he worked for Oxfam for five days for the same pay.

Former residents of the ghost village of Maipon present quite another face of misery.

In the afternoons, women gather on the grounds of a half-buried school overlooking the barangay that the mudslide had turned into a graveyard, to await relief goods.

Food rations have been coming "in trickles" despite an outpouring of help from local and international institutions, the women said.

When a vehicle approaches, they race down the road faintly hoping for answered prayers—only to learn that it was just passing through and heading elsewhere.

According to Rosalinda Esquilio, the word is that barangay officials would release more relief goods during the election period.

"That means we have to make do with what we receive until May," she said.

(A barangay official in Guinobatan, who did not want to be named, also said part of the relief goods borne by Malacañang's "Caravan of Mercy" was being stored in the social hall for distribution in time for the May polls: *"Sa eleksyon pa po yun."*)

To claim a relief package—usually made up of two kilos of rice and two cans of sardines—one has to present a ticket, said Dolores Baliat.

But on good days when private institutions conduct relief operations, the women receive bags containing noodles, coffee, rice and imported canned goods, said Dolores Paliza.

Sarah Buhler, a *balikbayan* from Germany on a visit to her home near Maipon, was outraged at what she saw.

"What is the ticket for?" she demanded to know as she took pictures of the women huddled under the trees. "All of them have suffered damage and loss, so they should all be given food and clothing."

She said that when she returned to Germany—her home for the past 22 years—she would put the pictures on the Internet to call attention to the issue.

Buhler said Europe had "offered a lot of help."

"But why are these people hungry? Where have all the help gone? What's the government doing with them?" she said.

'Old story'

Governor Gonzales denied that relief goods were being hoarded for distribution in May.

He said the shortage of aid was "an old story in Albay."

"Everywhere in the world, even in the United States, relief goods are scarce," he said. "We only give what is available. But you can't [define] what and quantify how much relief goods [they need]. How do you satisfy somebody?" *Tomorrow: Survivors' stories*

AS OF JANUARY 29

DSWD got ₱66,423,065.84 in donations, says Cabral

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL Welfare and Development said that as of Jan. 29, the DSWD had received a total of P66,423,065.84 in donations to help the victims of Supertyphoon "Reming."

Of this sum, it said, P57,196,586.50 were foreign donations in kind; P3,594,696 were local donations in kind; and P5,631,783.34 were in cash.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said the department still continued to receive donations, according to the DSWD statement issued on Feb. 6.

She expressed gratitude to "all the donors, foreign and local, who generously shared their resources."

"With the magnitude of the effects of Reming and with millions of individuals affected, the DSWD may not have been able to sustain its disaster operations and relief distribution without the help of our generous donors," Cabral said.

The DSWD said tents, gas stoves, kitchen utensils, mattresses, blankets, generators, sleeping bags, food and medicines were donated by Malaysia, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan and Singapore.

"We wish to assure all donors that we have used and are using their donations for the purpose they were intended," Cabral said.

Red Cross, NGOs

She also said there were other foreign and local donors who coursed their donations through the Red Cross, nongovernment organizations and other groups.

The local donors were composed of private corporations, government agencies and private individuals, the DSWD said.

The list of donors may be accessed at the DSWD webpage, www.dswd.gov.ph.

Believers see 'sad image of Jesus Christ' on rock

From page A1

vices," Isip said in the vernacular.

Bowing before image

The large rock is facing Mt. Mayon.

People come to see the rock in the morning and at dusk when the golden rays of the sun highlight the features of the boulder, she said.

On Monday morning, media workers and some 200 people came to the village to take a look at the large rock.

Isip said she saw some people bowing before the image.

People's penchant for seeing faces everywhere they look—in the moon, Rorschach inkblots, clouds, interference patterns from oil spills, potato chips or cinnamon buns—are hardwired in the brain, according to scientists. *(See story on this page.)*

Biggest object

Neuroscientists quoted by the International Herald Tribune said a particular area of the brain gave faces priority.

Herminia Obenita, 38, said the boulder was the biggest object one would see in at the lahar-covered site.

She wondered how the flood carried it from the slopes of Mayon to where it is now.

Obenita said some of the displaced Maipon residents who had heard the news about the image would come from the Travesia Elementary School, where they are temporarily housed in tents, to see if it was true.

Few people were left in Maipon when the INQUIRER visited the site Tuesday.

One could see mostly dry sand and rocks, newly created river channels, and abandoned homes.

There were workers reconnecting big rubber pipes as they were rebuilding the water system that distributed drinking water to the municipality.

Once in a while, displaced villagers go back to Maipon to dig up their belongings, according to Obenita.

Last Sunday, a man, by chance, dug out the decomposed body of a 5-year-old boy, who was identified by his grandmother by the shirt he wore.

Why does the brain look for faces?

New York Times News Service

WHY DO WE SEE FACES EVERYwhere we look: in the moon, in Rorschach inkblots, in the interference patterns on the surface of oil spills?

Compelling answers are beginning to emerge from biologists and computer scientists who are gaining new insights into how the brain recognizes and processes facial data.

Doris Tsao, a neuroscientist at the University of Bremen in Germany, had an inkling that people might process faces differently from other objects. Her suspicion was that a particular area of the brain gives faces priority, like an airline offering first-class passengers expedited boarding.

Tsao used functional magnetic resonance imaging to record which areas of the brain were activated when macaque monkeys were presented with stimuli, including fruits, gadgets, scrambled patterns—and faces. She discovered almost immediately that groups of cells in three regions of the [illegible] lobe seemed to be strongly attuned to faces.

"The first day we put the electrode in, it was shocking," Tsao said. "Cell after cell responded to faces but not at all to other objects." Her results were published in October in the journal Science.

Tsao's investigation yielded a surprising related finding: areas of the brain she had identified as face-specific occasionally lighted up in response to objects that bore only a passing resemblance to faces.

In the same way, she said, objects like rocky outcroppings and cloud formations may set off face radar if they bear enough resemblance to actual faces.

Pawan Sinha, a cognitive scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has devoted years of research to figuring out just what attributes touch off these face-specific pings. Sinha put into his computer hundreds of images of faces.

As the computer amassed the information, it was able to discover relationships that were of great significance to almost all faces, but very few nonfaces. "These turn out to be very simple relationships, things like the eyes are always darker than the forehead, and the mouth is darker than the cheeks," Sinha said. "If you put together about 12 of these relationships, you get a template that you can use to locate a face."

This suggests that the human brain processes faces holistically, like coherent landscapes, rather than one feature at a time.

Sinha says that whether the response to faces is innate or learned, it represents a critical evolutionary adaptation, one that dwarfs side effects like seeing Beelzebub in a crumpled tissue.

"The information faces convey is so rich—not just regarding another person's identity, but also their mental state, health, and other factors," he said. "It's extremely beneficial for the brain to become good at the task of face recognition and not to be very strict in its inclusion criteria. The cost of missing a face is higher than the cost of declaring a nonface to be a face."

The De La Salle University Medical Center (DLSUMC) in Dasmariñas, Cavite hits a major milestone this year as it celebrates its silver jubilee. With the theme *DLSUMC: 25 taong serbisyong de kalidad*, the celebration will highlight the premium put on health care and delivery, and the people who made DLSUMC the most comprehensive hospital in the region.

DLSUMC STILL THE BEST IN HEALTHCARE IN REGION IV

All over the Philippines, the Hospital was the first to be given the ISO9001:2000 Certificate, besting over 1,800 hospitals, even the ones located in Metro Manila. The honor was conferred by TUV Rheinland Philippines, Inc. In 1999, ISO for hospitals in the Philippines was quite a novelty, however, after DLSUMC passed the three-day audit with flying colors, other hospitals have since followed suit.

ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization and is a group propounding quality management systems by which organizations have common and acceptable criteria for total quality. According to its website, the benefit of ISO for the consumers is that it assures them of "quality, safety, and reliability." The Hospital having met standards imposed by ISO, a network of institutes of standards in 157 countries, may be classified as among the medical centers upholding international gauge of quality and excellence.

The quest for providing better health services did not stop after the certification. In fact, the Hospital got re-certified by ISO in 2003. Two years after that, the Hospital stepped a notch higher as it was accorded the ISO14001:1996 Environmental Management System Certificate. The honor recognized DLSUMC's adherence to globally-accepted standards for promoting environmental protection and resource conservation. To clients, this translates to being accorded top-notch service but not at the expense of the environment, from which everybody benefits.

Awards are but the tip of the iceberg for the Institution. Previously, it also copped the "Best Tertiary Level Hospital in Region IV" citation, and was named by UNICEF as a Mother-Baby Friendly Hospital. But the raison d'etre for its existence is the people.

Dr. Paulo Campos, a national scientist, was a staunch supporter of that belief. He established the University Medical Center in 1982 as a teaching hospital for then General Emilio Aguinaldo College, and in compliance to a DECS requirement for medical schools to have their own training hospital. The Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres were commissioned to run it. The medical school, and later the hospital, was established in support of a government move to disperse delivery of quality education in the suburbs. Thus, Campos put up his own in the 27-acre property in Bagumbayan, Cavite.

In 1987, De La Salle University took over the management of both the school and the hospital. The latter's name was then changed to the De La Salle University Medical Center. DLSUMC currently serves as the training hospital for De La Salle-Health Sciences Campus' Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Physical Therapy, and Radiologic Technology.

From its "small" beginnings as a 100-bed hospital, it has now doubled its capacity, with a pediatric ward and bed allocations for needy patients. The DLSUMC has also grown in terms of numbers of specializations offered through its various Centers, among them Tuberculosis, Tantiansu Cancer Institute, Eye, Hearing, Adult Immunization, to name but a few.

On the week of its Silver Jubilee weeklong launching celebration, the new DLSUMC Diagnostic and Imaging Center will be inaugurated. The Hospital will bring in new equipment from General Electric, including the Lunar Prodigy Advance Digital Densitometer, the Millennium MPR Gamma Camera, and Signa Profile Excite Magnetic Resonance Imaging system.

Over the past 25 years, the Hospital has served as a beacon in the region by setting the benchmark in the delivery of excellent healthcare, and training of competent and ethical health professionals. Not only does it have the recognition to prove its stature as a comprehensive teaching hospital by local and international standards, it also enjoys the patronage of the people of Cavite and its environs, for which the Hospital chooses to continuously grow, innovate, and improve the best. At 25, DLSUMC reaffirms its commitment to be a genuine resource for Church and Nation.

De La Salle-Health Sciences Campus
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www.hsc.dlsu.edu.ph

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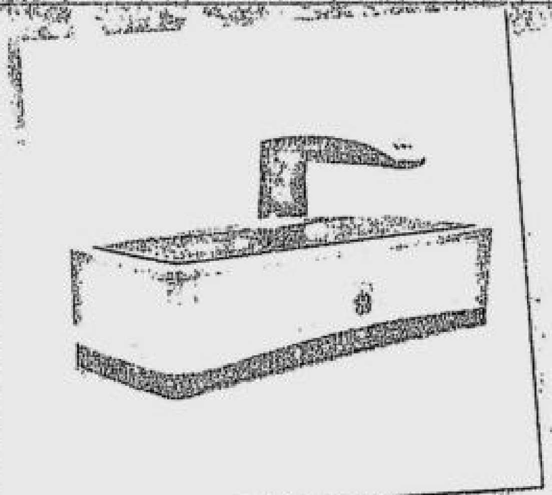
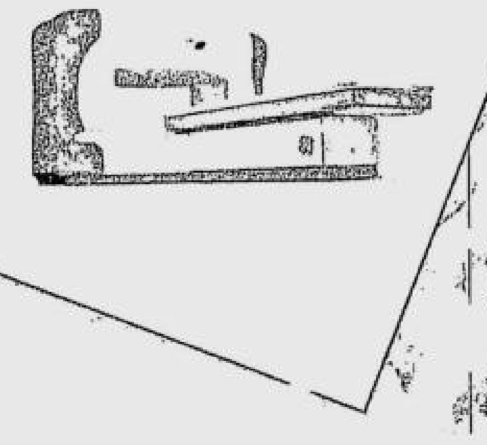
DLSUMC & GE: forging new partnerships



The Lunar Prodigy Advance Digital Bone Densitometer, a state-of-the-art screening tool, allows for early diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis.



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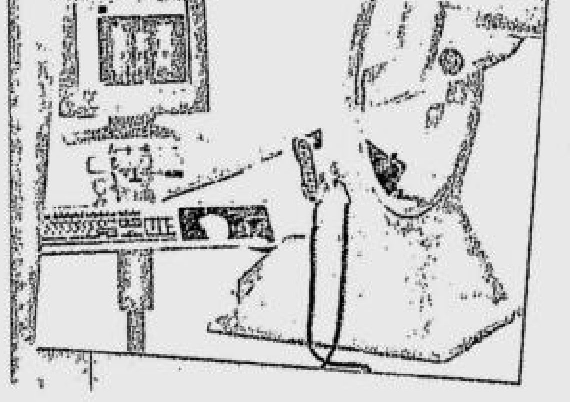


A clean, detailed diagnosis is integral to effective treatment. **The Millennium MPR Gamma Camera** is capable of much, much more from liver scans to white blood cell imaging.

The De La Salle University Medical Center (DLSUMC) and General Electric (GE) form a new partnership.

Set for inauguration today is the new DLSUMC Diagnostic and Imaging Center, boosted by the addition of state-of-the art machines acquired from GE. The event is part of the Silver Jubilee Celebration of DLSUMC. launched from February 12 to 16.

The Hospital procured three new diagnostic equiptment from GE. The Lunar Prodigy Advance Digital Densitometer, a computer-assisted whole body screening tool, is the most comprehensive machine for detecting osteoporosis. To date, DLSUMC is one of two hospitals in the country to have it, and the only one outside of Metro Manila.

Moreover, DLSUMC will also add the GE Millennium MPR Gamma Camera and the GE Signa Profile Excite Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) system to the Center. Both machines, which render high-resolution whole body imaging services to analyze various organs, muscle, tissues, and other vital parts, are part of the Nuclear Imaging Section of the Center.

As part of this new partnership, GE will provide on-site applications and operator's training for radiographers and training for doctors in clinical sites in the U.S. and in Southeast Asia.

Other services offered by the DLSUMC Diagnostic and Imaging Center are general radiography, CT scan, ultrasound, mammography, fluoroscopy, radioimmunoassay laboratory, radioactive iodine uptake and therapy, and urea breath test for helicobacter pylori infection.

ROMANCING NATURE: Newlyweds walk to the shore planted with new mangrove saplings after their mass wedding at sunrise of Valentine's Day in Puerto Princesa. The wedding of 100 couples, officiated by Mayor Edward Hagedorn, is a joint project of DepEd and DENR. *(Story on Page A6.)* AFP

DFA releases names of 24 RP seamen freed by Niger kidnappers

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFfairs (DFA) last night released the names of the 24 Filipino seamen freed by kidnappers in Nigeria.

They are **Ruben Roble**, master; **Elmer Nacionales**, chief officer; **Carlos Abellana**, 2nd officer; **Mauro Agacid**, 3rd officer; **Roberto Arcangel**, chief engineer; **Cirilo Nebit**, 2nd engineer; **Herculano Cagas**, 3rd engineer; **Edilberto Gaspi**, electro-tech officer; **Sukarno Landasan**, bosun; **Jonel Bernales** and **Rogelio Sarcia**, key able bodied seaman; **Marlon Mendez** and **Manolo Isidro**, able bodied seaman; **Jose Talde**, **Ronaldo Corpuz** and **Joven Hidalgo**, ordinary seamen; **Henry Sebastian**, engine fitter; **Edgardo Ellera**, **Jonie Saguid** and **Evelio Nacionales**, motorman; **Marcelino Caladman**, chief cook; **Nelson Aquino**, 2nd cook; and **Herman Valdez**, steward.

DFA spokesperson Claro Cristobal said the seamen were staying in a hotel in Warri and were to be flown today to the Nigerian capital of Abuja, where the Philippine Embassy is located. "They are all found to be in a very good condition. But more detailed examinations will be conducted, the usual debriefing of course," he said.

Cristobal said that Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos, who left last Sunday for Nigeria, would coordinate efforts to locate and secure the release of two other Filipino hostages: engineer Winston Helera, who was reportedly being held somewhere in the river state of Owerri; and Josiebeth Faroozan, who was snatched by armed men on her way to the bank in Port Harcourt last week. Faroozan is married to an Iranian businessman.

Helera's kidnappers were pressing for the release of two political prisoners while the motive for Faroozan's kidnapping has not been established.

Leyte survivors discover ...

From page A1

found themselves staying in the same school that served as shelter for the survivors.

Three months later, she said, they started living together as a couple. They helped each other through the difficult times and eventually fell in love.

Guinsaugon was buried by mud when a portion of Mt. Kan-abag collapsed and covered the entire village, killing at least 1,000.

Neria was hard put to "explain my feelings" when asked how it felt to get married for the second time.

She and her new love were actually one of four couples—all survivors of the landslide—who got married in a Valentine's Day mass wedding sponsored by the municipal government.

The four couples were in turn among the 70 pairs who were wed at the St. Bernard municipal hall at 3 p.m. yesterday, a few days before the first anniversary of the tragedy.

The other three couples were widower Alfredo Buab, 32, and Genelin Dagasdas, 18, who lost her family in the landslide; Vicenta Pilo, 35, and Junie Kafaela, 27; and Anastacia Dagasdas, 47, and Norberto Cavite, 30.

The women were dressed in simple white dresses, the men in barong Tagalog.

A simple repast of spaghetti, fried chicken and bread provided by the municipal government was served after the mass wedding. The newlyweds received miniature bells as giveaways, according to New Guinsaugon Mayor Maria Lim.

Fathers Francis Vega and Manuel Lagumbay officiated over the wedding ceremony. Mayor Lim did the honors for seven non-Catholic couples.

Others who found love

The four newlywed couples from Guinsaugon are among the more than 40 survivors now living in new homes at the relocation site named after their old village, New Guinsaugon village chief Iglicerio Coquilla said.

Coquilla disclosed that he himself had also been living with another landslide survivor, 48-year-old Rosario Nabos, since May.

He said they were also planning to get married and had set Feb. 24 as the date.

"I want it to be special [and not part of a mass wedding]," Coquilla said.

Rogelio Arcenas, another survivor who lost his wife and two children to the landslide, said he had also found a new partner among the survivors but that they planned to get married after the first anniversary of the tragedy.

The national government, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development, has provided cash assistance totaling P5.5 million to the immediate families of the 550 Guinsaugon residents still missing to this day.

The survivors received P10,000 each for those "missing but confirmed dead."

St. Bernard Vice Mayor Felix Lim said the cash assistance had nothing to do with the midterm elections on May 14.

Lim said authorities had taken a long time to prepare the documents because certain papers needed authentication.

Biggest in Bacolod

In Bacolod City, over 500 couples were wed in a mass wedding held at the Bays Center yesterday, with Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia officiating. *(See related story on Page A6.)*

Melchor Natial, 65, and Hermilinda Barabat, 49, both of Barangay Tangub, were the oldest couple who exchanged marriage vows before the mayor.

The youngest were Ronald Almajo, 18, and Ann Rica Casilagan, 19, both of Barangay Handumanan.

"This is one of the most significant projects that the city government has undertaken because we are formalizing and blessing the most basic unit of our society, which is the family," Leonardia said.

It was the Bacolod Civil Registrar's Office that initiated this year's mass wedding—the biggest recorded in the city—as part of the observance of Civil Registrar Month.

The city's civil registrar, Evelyn Legaspina, recalled that 375 couples took part in last year's mass wedding, and only 351 in 2005.

The mass weddings are held for free, she added. With a report from Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

Lovers watch out ...

From page A1

cers to monitor parking lots, parks and other public places for couples exhibiting a little too much passion on Cupid's day.

In past years on Valentine's Day, couples have been caught making love in the back seats of cars in prominent areas such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines along Roxas Boulevard, Garcia said.

"If it's simply kissing, that's all right," said Garcia. "(But) the people we've arrested there in the past were engaged in actual sex already."

The Philippines is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and although a conservative society where divorce is outlawed, extramarital affairs are common.

Manila police also were ordered to watch motels for violations of city ordinance banning "short time" stays, Garcia said. *AP*

24 freed Pinoys coming home

From page A1

The Nigerian government gave no details of the deal that led to the release of the hostages, saying only that they were being taken back by ferry to Warri, the capital of Delta State.

Although it is still unclear which group was responsible for the seizure, a high-profile militant group in Niger Delta, the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), blamed a rival group.

The fate of two other Filipinos taken hostage last week was still unknown.

A Filipino woman was abducted on Feb. 7 in nearby Port Harcourt in Rivers State, while a Filipino employee of Netco Dietsmann—the Nigerian arm of a Monaco-based oil services company—was seized from a company car heading for the airport in Owerri, the capital of Imo State a day earlier.

After the 24 seamen were kidnapped, Ms Arroyo ordered a ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Nigeria.

"From the start, we never doubted the capability of the Nigerian government to rescue our workers and I also wish to commend our diplomatic personnel for being focused and faithful to their tasks," said Ms Arroyo.

The President referred to Ambassador at-large Roy Cimatu, resident Ambassador Maranga Umpa and Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos, among others.

Nigeria is one of the biggest employers of Filipino workers in Africa, with some 3,900 Filipinos employed there at the end of 2006.

The Philippines is one of Asia's biggest exporters of manpower, with an estimated eight million of its citizens working as maids, seafarers, oil rig workers and in other labor-intensive jobs.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita denied that ransom was paid by the Philippine government to the kidnappers and said the Palace had no idea whether the hostage-taking incident was politically motivated.

Lift news blackout

"In all probability, probably they just wanted some amounts paid to them. But the good thing is they (Filipinos) have not been harmed, and the negotiations have not been tedious and difficult as the negotiations we had" in the past, he said.

Ermita advised the Department of Foreign Affairs to lift the news blackout it had imposed during the captivity.

"I don't know that there's a news blackout. But after all they have been released, maybe we can ask the Department of Foreign Affairs to reconsider that instructions about this news blackout," he added.

Ermita insisted that the "life of every Filipino is very important." *With a report from AFP*

9 suspected NPA hired guns ...

From page A1

Supt. Roger James Brillantes, chief of the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG), said the men, all from Cagayan, were seized from a van at a checkpoint in Biñan, Laguna.

Taken from the van were five M16 rifles, three M14 rifles, a block of C4 explosives, detonating cord and hundreds of ammunitions.

Brillantes said the weapons indicated the men were NPA guerrillas for hire.

"We have requested the military intelligence operatives in Cagayan Valley to help us verify if they are NPA members. We are also checking if these people are included in the list of private armies in Region 2," Brillantes told the INQUIRER.

Brillantes said his men had received information that hired assassins from Cagayan had arrived in Laguna to ambush two mayoral candidates in Rizal, Cagayan, who were on vacation in San Pedro, Laguna, and in Quezon City. Names of the candidates were withheld.

Acting on a tip that the group was on its way back to Cagayan, Brillantes said he immediately ordered a police checkpoint in Barangay Mamplasan, Biñan town.

Arrested were driver Iriel Natividad, 38; Victor Baluran, 49; Roy Caberoz, 27; Allan dela Cruz, 29; Ryan dela Cruz, 21—all of Tuguegarao; Nilo Patay, 29, of Rizal; and Onofre Ladera, 56, of Apayao. Names of two others aged 13 and 15 were withheld.

Surveillance

"Actually, we have been casing their safe house since late last year because we had received information that armed men frequented that place. We thought then that they were kidnappers or bank robbers," he said.

He said the suspects, on board a coaster van (RBH 969), were intercepted just before they entered the Mamplasan exit of the South Luzon Expressway at around 7 p.m.

The vehicle had a sign "Local government unit. Do not delay," placed on its windshield apparently to avoid inspection.

But when the police checked with the Land Transportation Office (LTO), they discovered that the license plate of the vehicle had not been issued yet, Brillantes said.

Chief Insp. Jesus Kabigting, RSOG intelligence division chief, said the group arrived from Cagayan Feb. 10 and briefly stayed at a condominium house owned by Rizal, Cagayan Mayor Raul dela Cruz.

Mission aborted

Two days later, the group went to a safe house in Barangay Ganado, Biñan, where the mayor has a construction business.

After studying the movement of their targets, the suspects were about to carry out their mission but decided to abort it when "something came up," Kabigting said.

"The suspects were actually going back to Cagayan when they were arrested," Kabigting said.

During questioning, the suspects admitted that they were under contract for P100,000 to kill the would-be rivals of Dela Cruz in the mayoral race in their town, he said.

Kabigting, however, refused to confirm if it was Dela Cruz who gave money to the suspects and if he directly ordered the botched assassination.

But Dela Cruz himself called up the RSOG and admitted that the arrested men were his employees, Kabigting said.

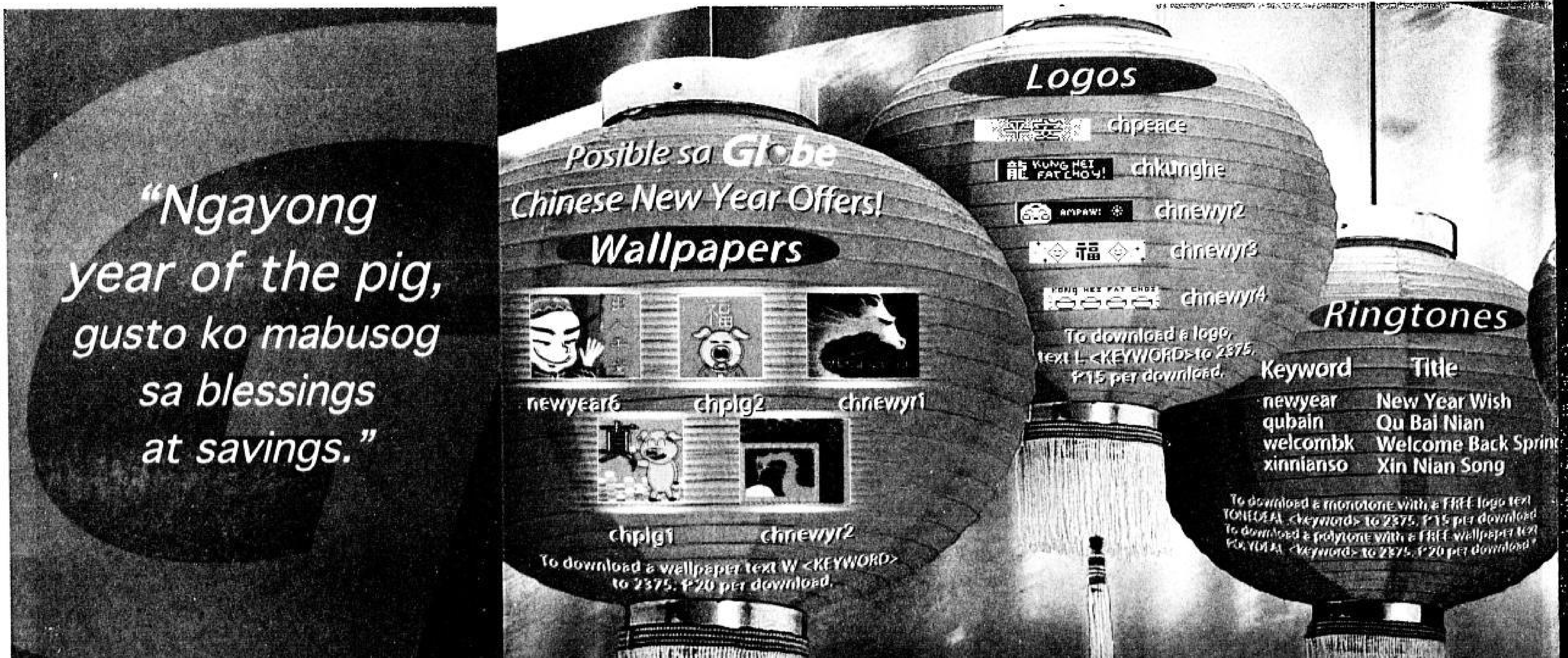
Education field trip

Brillantes said Dela Cruz reported that the men were on a "Lakbay Aral" trip.

No case could be filed against Dela Cruz until the arrested men identified him as their financier and mastermind.

The INQUIRER attempted but failed to get a comment from Dela Cruz.

Mark Oliveros, counsel of the arrested men, declined to give a statement. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*



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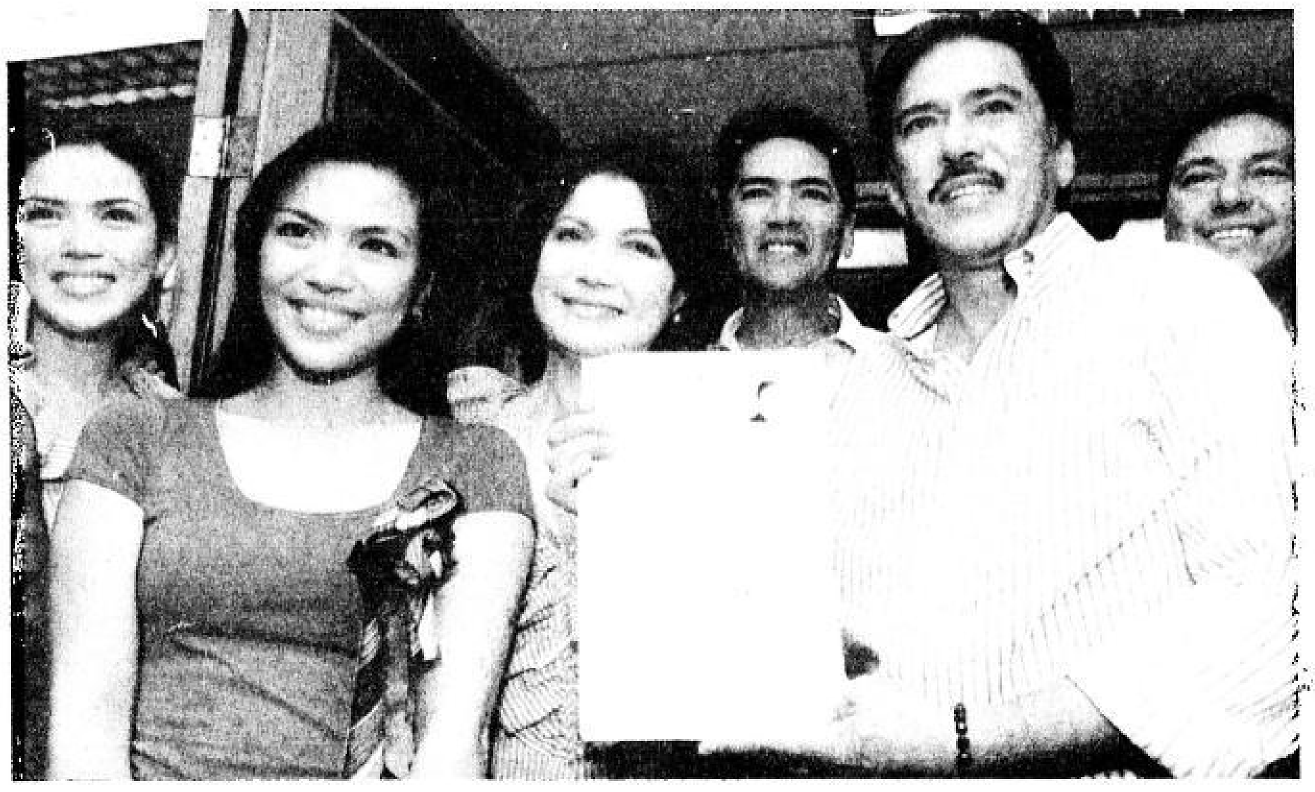
VALENTINE'S DATE. Sen. Ping Lacson and wife Alice celebrate Valentine's Day on the campaign trail, stumping along with other opposition candidates in Monumento in Caloocan City on the second day of the senatorial campaign. JOAN BONDOC



FAMILY AFFAIR. Former Sen. Tito Sotto shows his certificate of candidacy shortly after launching his bid for a return to the Senate. Accompanying him are his wife, Helen Gamboa, brothers Vic and Maru and daughters Lala and Ciara, and other children. He is running under Team Unity. RYAN LIM

FULL FAMILY SUPPORT. Former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, poses for a photo after filing her certificate of candidacy under the Unity Ticket. She was fully supported by her family from both Aquino and Oreta sides, including Lupita Aquino-Kashiwahara and other sisters, husband Antolin Oreta (right) and their children. RYAN LIM

3 Aquinos running

TARLAC REP. BENIGNO "NOYNOY" Aquino III and his aunt, former senator Tessie Aquino-Oreta, would not have problems over who would get votes cast for "Aquino" in the May 14 elections, Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said yesterday.

Abalos said the congressman might have problems with his distant cousin, Theodore Aquino, who is also running for senator as an independent.

Theodore Aquino, a civil engineer and holder of Philippine and United States citizenships, filed his certificate of candidacy on Jan. 15.

"If the family name is read (during the vote counting), the vote goes to the one who bears that family name. When she filed her certificate of candidacy, Tessie Aquino-Oreta used the family name Oreta so the vote of Aquino would go to the one who bears the surname Aquino," the chair told reporters in a press conference.

According to Theodore Aquino, his father Claudio and the Tarlac lawmaker's father, the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., were first cousins. Tessie Aquino-Oreta is the younger sister of the late senator.

The Comelec chief said that if voters do not want to write Aquino in their ballots, they could always write the three candidates' aliases or nicknames Noynoy, Kuya Ted and Tessie.

Abalos said the Commission, on its own, many summon Theodore Aquino and ascertain his seriousness and capability in running for the Senate.

With regards to the two senatorial candidates with the surname Cayetano, Abalos said the Commission was waiting for either one to file a petition to disqualify the other.

Jerome Aning

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES account for almost 17 M deaths each year, making it the greatest risk to life for most adults.

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Relicts

EDITORIAL

TO BE SURE, THE OPPOSITION SENATE SLATE IS a strong one. But its weaknesses are exposed by its continuing inability to cobble together a name for itself and by its over-reliance on the blessings of Joseph Estrada. It was typically mean for administration operatives to turn away Senate President Manuel Villar from Estrada's detention house. However, whatever gains the opposition could milk from the incident were lost by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's rambling about how crucial, even central, in these coming elections Estrada's endorsements are.

Simply put, an addiction to Estrada is robbing the opposition of the opportunity to bring out the fundamental issues of this campaign. The opposition can justifiably say, for example, that the administration, to pad its thin ranks, had to poach for oppositionists who, as far back as the FPJ campaign, have been eyed skeptically by their co-oppositionists. (Tito Sotto and Tessie Aquino-Oreta have been under a cloud of doubt since 2004). So the sheep were naturally separated from the goats.

The opposition can also say that there is breathtaking hypocrisy on display when the President loftily calls for her people not to indulge in "mudslinging" when, in fact, they have no qualms using underhanded tactics to further the administration's political advantage. Neither the President nor her people can claim moral ascendancy in terms of self-control—much less respect for, and devotion to, institutions or even public opinion.

Sergio Osmeña Jr., the opposition presidential candidate defeated by Ferdinand Marcos in 1969, said he was "outgunned, outgooned and outgold," which only showed how shortsighted he was in viewing that fight in purely traditional terms. Worse, as the late veteran journalist Manuel Martinez saw it, Osmeña, who never showed teeth even when he was smiling (in contrast to Marcos' famous "Colgate smile"), failed to realize "that the issue against Serging was not only moral, but molar."

The opposition has only partially succeeded in pitting young lawyer Adel Tamano, its campaign spokesperson, who resisted administration efforts to draft him in its slate (and who is a living reproach to the tokenism represented by Jamalul Kiram III, the most un-modern Muslim candidate possible), against administration campaign manager Reli German. However, Tamano's attempt to frame the election as "people of the Philippines versus GMA" is not being backed up by the slate he speaks for.

Since 2005, the opposition has been handicapped by preferring glibness to a real discussion of the issues—even when the issues were handed on a silver platter. This continues to be the biggest flaw of people like Alan Peter Cayetano.

To return to our 1969 example, all the "Marcosian" political tricks are emerging in full force, as far as the administration is concerned. Local races are being evaluated critically and enhanced with turncoatism up and down the line: the recent Kampi extravaganza at the Manila Hotel seemed a reunion of the Lakas-CMD. Resources have been pledged with wild abandon. Association with Virgilio Garcillano has been no obstacle to promotion in the Comelec. Efforts to keep the armed forces away from electoral temptations have been reversed. And throughout, the conditioning of the public—the massaging of opinion in preparation for massaging the vote—has been relentless. The interior secretary, the one who supervises the Philippine National Police, this early predicts a 90 percent local sweep for the administration.

Through all these, the administration continues to trot out relicts of the past, while saying that the election is about tomorrow and not yesterday. But it's not: it's about today, how a President has allowed no obstacle—moral, legal, institutional—to stand in the way of her efforts not only to cling to power, but also to further entrench herself in it.

The supposed trump card of the administration is the economy. German said statistics don't lie: and no oppositionist called his bluff by pointing out the repeated instances the President herself was caught wanting to fudge statistics for cosmetic effect. Never mind being "outgunned, outgooned and outgold"—the opposition is even being "outlied."

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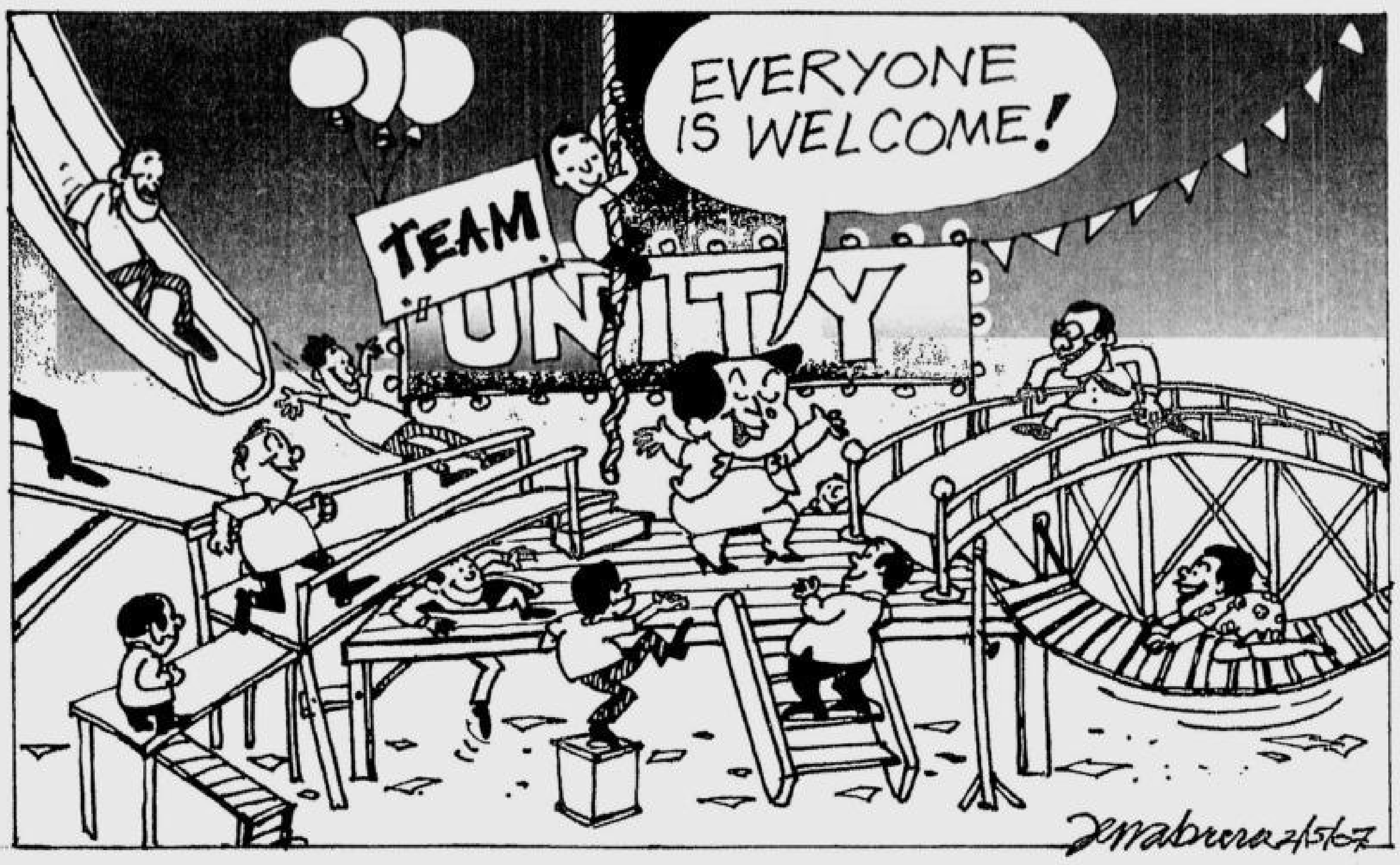

Guarding three villages

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THERE'S A STORY ABOUT JOKER ARROYO I never told the senator. Perhaps, it's time to tell it, now that the election campaign has bolted from the blocks. Joker was "among the earliest to file his candidacy," the INQUIRER reported. "(He) wore a simple collared shirt without any show-biz star by his side."

This low-key tack contrasted with the other candidates' shrill hype. "I do not dress up like a popinjay," Cyrano de Bergerac said. "I carry my adornments on my soul,/ .... Garlanded with my good name and hung with deeds for decoration." He didn't bear, either "an honor frayed to rags, a set of scruples badly worn…"

Self-effacing honor is the story. Following People Power I, a mint-new President Corazon Aquino inherited a country ravaged by 14 years of dictatorial kleptocracy. Treadmill emergencies needed someone with international savvy plus firm knuckles, some argued. But who?

It's murky now who got the ball rolling. But the talented Rafael Salas' name surfaced. Soon, the "Salas boys"—bright, young technocrats who saw "Paeng" as guru—sought to bag the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) director's old job under Marcos: executive secretary.

Salas himself flew in. While diplomatically diffident, he delivered scathing addresses on sensitive national issues. There was one hitch. Sitting in the executive secretary's chair was Joker Arroyo. "We've thrown even the kitchen sink," a Salas boy wailed. "But the President won't budge. Why?"

You forgot what Cory Aquino remembered, I replied. Thousands jettisoned principle to grovel before the dictatorship. When oppression was harshest and Cory looked around, who did she find? Only a handful, among them Chino Roces, Lorenzo Tañada Sr., Jose Diokno, Teodoro Locsin Sr.—and Joker Arroyo. Risking all, they met injustice head on.

Such men tend to "stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood / disguise fair nature with hard-favored rage," Henry V said. That's their track record. "Now that Cory is President, you think she will forget?" I asked my depressed friend.

Today's campaign reminds us that some 35 years ago, Joker proved to newsmen, jailed by the Marcos dictatorship, that you can pick senatorial candidates even when jammed into a prison "Black Maria" careening to a farcical court hearing.

Joker's mop of uncombed silver hair was black then. And my girth was eight inches smaller. But that was the last thing in our minds as journalists, arrested on the strength of Juan Ponce Enrile's "Xeroxed" martial law warrants and filed into the military van.

Among those I followed into the "Black Maria" were: Daily Mirror columnist Amando Doronila; Evening News' Luis Beltran; Taliba's Benny Esquivel; Graphic editor Luis Mauricio; PNS' Manuel Almario. The decrepit TV set in the detainees' area blared Kanlaon Broadcasting System's replays: "Disiplina Ang Kailangan" jingles and snippets of Information Minister Francisco Tatad mouthing "Letters of Instruction."

We didn't know it then. But the tribunal was hearing a habeas corpus petition for us (GR No. L-35567). The National Press Club president—the late Eddie Monteclaro—sued when most scampered for cover. Journalists detained in Fort Bonifacio appeared before the tribunal the day before: Manila Times' Joaquin "Chino" Roces and Max Soliven were in that "first wave." So were the Free Press' Teodoro Locsin Sr. and Napoleon Rama.

In Court, we met our pro bono lawyer: Joker Arroyo. Other counsels mustered by Monteclaro were: detained Sen. Jose Diokno, Ambassador Sedfrey Ordoñez, Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, among others.

But "there is much law at the end of a bayonet." Our backs were to the wall. Our padlocked newspapers couldn't provide a legal fund. And we discovered that those loudest in advocating liberty of expression before 1081 emerged as the martial law's harshest censors.

"Whenever freedom of the press has been permitted, Filipinos defended it with passion," David Rosenberg writes in "Liberty versus Loyalty" (Cornell University 1979). "Whenever it has been prohibited, they complied with government regulations with obsequiousness."

Yet, Joker stood up for us. "Except for a few, those guys can't be trusted," he whispered, nodding toward the Marcos justices filing in. "But staying in this petition offers you what little protection is available in these times." Then, he did battle for us. "I owe this man one," the late Louie Beltran murmured under his breath. Me, too.

In 1972, not even Joker foresaw that he'd run for the Senate. Nor did I realize that the family and I had decided, 35 years ago, to vote for Joker this May, even if he lacks the props of show-biz stars. "Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried / Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel," Polonius counsels Laetres in Hamlet.

Joker's work as senator, since then, has been broader than press concerns. This was the no-nonsense prosecutor who flashed Jose Velarde's signature on the wall of the impeachment trial court. "We cannot continue to have a thief as president," he snapped. And he has battled the excesses of the present administration, from its farcical "people's initiative" to unjustified claims of emergency power.

"A good man," the Chinese proverb aptly says, "guards three villages."

* * *

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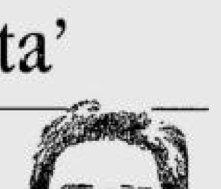
'Artista'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



SOMEONE ASKED ME ABOUT IT IN AN out-of-town talk recently. What did I think of the *artistas* running for public office?

I answered: I have no problems with actors going into politics so long as they are qualified for the job. Or so long as they prepare themselves for the job. I don't know why we should discriminate against a particular profession as being naturally inimical to public service. I don't see that being a lawyer, engineer, architect, businessman, doctor, or nurse better prepares one for it.

Acting, at its best, requires tremendous levels of professionalism and hard work, the kind you expect from public officials. If only by this, the right attitude would probably be to discriminate only against the bad actors, or the ones who are too lazy to improve their craft. If you can't be good in the profession you've embraced, you can't be good in one you want to screw.

Arguably, *artistas* carry with them an undue advantage, which is popularity. I use that category quite incidentally not just to refer to actors but to all those thrust into the public eye by media, including people in media themselves. Loren Legarda is the product of media. As is Noli de Castro. I have little doubt that if Korina Sanchez ran for senator, she would win hands down. And to give credit where credit is due, I commend her for not doing so. It is an exercise in restraint worthy of emulation by others in her and kindred professions. Being popular alone is not a natural claim to public service, even if in this country it is an engraved invitation to it.

Arguably as well, *artistas* carry with them a lot of baggage when they come into public office. To this day, I cannot understand why we do not have a law banning public officials from engaging in private occupations, specifically *artistas* who become senators and mayors or get into other elected positions and continue to do movies or appear on TV. Many years ago, an actor-turned-mayor-turned-actor justified it in a talk show by saying that he did it so he could earn extra income to give to his constituents. His official budget, he said, was not enough. He had to resort to acting to give food and medicine to the poor.

I was in the same talk show and was absolutely dumbfounded by what he said. There is really no defense against someone who lies epically in public other than to exclaim, "What a load of bull!" Not being one to do that, I just said with all the irony I could muster, which was probably lost on the viewers, "I believe you are the outstanding exception in that respect."

The only thing I can really suggest is that we turn a more discriminating eye on the *artistas* rather than frown on them to a man or woman. Some of them have been passionately engaged these past years in political causes, not least in protesting the rule of someone who never won the elections. I don't know why they should be ignored or dismissed simply for belonging to a profession that is given to faking reality when we have in sheer abundance people belonging to other professions, among them economists, who have made a career of realizing fakeness.

Which brings me to a crucial point, one we should examine deathly seriously. That is that the people who are most strident in warning us against the *artistas* are in fact the *trapos*. By all means beware of *artistas* offering genuineness, but even more so beware of *trapos* guaranteeing fakeness. Between the dumbest *artista* and the cleverest *trapo*, I'd take the first anytime.

The harm that the *artista* can do is nothing compared to the harm that the *trapo* can do. I never bought Joker Arroyo's contention some years ago that it was better to vote for GMA rather than FPJ because there was a constitutional remedy for corruption (impeachment) but not so for stupidity. There may be a constitutional remedy for corruption, but the epically corrupt—the kind that robs a country's soul and not just its body—can always trash the Constitution. In fact, they can always trash the vote. GMA did. She trashed the vote and she trashed the Constitution.

Between GMA and FPJ, I'd pick FPJ anytime. Between JDV and Erap, I'd pick Erap anytime. In a country where public officials are dedicated to ripping off the citizens—a fact easily seen in the fortunes candidates spend to get elected, an investment they mean to recoup at usurious interest rates—lack of brains is a veritable virtue in public office. Less brains, less pillage. Less brains, less ruination.

A foreign correspondent once asked me what the difference was between GMA and Erap, given that both of them have messed up the country. I said Erap wanted power and wealth for what they could bring him while GMA wants power and wealth period. For Erap, power and wealth are the means to pleasure, for GMA pursuing power and wealth is the pleasure and attaining them, the climax. What's true of Erap and GMA is true as well in a general way of the *artistas* and the *trapos*.

Look at the *trapos* in power today. Look at GMA and Mike Arroyo, look at their children, look at their official family, which includes Raul Gonzalez and Ronaldo Puno; look at JDV, the two prosperous buffoons Pichay and Nograles, and at the two Bicolanos after whom God sent two superstorms to Bicol to try to seek out, Luis Villafuerte and Edcel Lagman, and their ilk. Look at the *trapos* running in the administration ticket. Look at them and ask yourself if the *artistas* constitute the real threat to society today.

The *artistas* can only mount a parody, the *trapos* can mount a tyranny. The *artistas* can only trot out an enchanted kingdom draped in tinsel, the *trapos* can build an Enchanted Kingdom strung with barbed wire.

Ah, but surely we have people who are neither *artistas* nor *trapos*? Yes, we do. But that's quite another story, or column

Support for Pasig ferry

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINTS FROM POLITICAL pundits and the citizenry about the "lack of ideology" in the current senatorial race, what with rival camps raiding each other for candidates. The result is tremendous confusion among the voters. But a keen political observer noted that the confusion would work to the advantage of the administration coalition. He said that the blurring of the lines would enable the administration candidates to overcome the low popularity ratings of the President.

* * *

Opposition candidate Francis Escudero blasted re-electionist Sen. Joker Arroyo for earlier slamming the opposition's failure to stand up for the Constitution when it was threatened by military adventurers; and to unequivocally declare its support for Vice President Noli de Castro as President Macapagal-Arroyo's constitutional successor in the event of her ouster. Arroyo cited this as the reason for his joining GMA's coalition. Escudero reminded Arroyo that, in the Estrada impeachment, he led the walkout of the prosecution team, which triggered Edsa II and ended up with Erap's ouster.

But Escudero should realize that a walkout is part of the dynamics in an impeachment process. Recall that he and his fellow oppositionists also walked out during the first impeachment bid against GMA in 2005; nobody complained they were doing something unconstitutional. Estrada's ouster was questioned later as unconstitutional, but then, as they say, when an ouster attempt succeeds, splitting hairs over it doesn't matter.

* * *

Yesterday morning, I attended the launch of the Pasig River Ferry Service, upon the invitation of its chair, Agustin Romulo Bengzon, who also heads the Maritime Leasing Corp. (MLC), a subsidiary of the National Development Co. This project will operate regular ferry service along the Pasig, from its mouth in Manila Bay to Napindan across the metropolis. There will be about 15 loading terminals along the entire length. It is a joint venture project between the private sector (which will finance the building of the 152-seat fiberglass, air-conditioned twin-hull boats) and the government (which will build the modern terminals, each costing P18 million), with a loan from the Asian Development Bank. The project is expected to help reduce traffic congestion in Metro Manila's roadways. Yesterday, two boats sailed from Malacañang Park to Guadalupe terminal (one of five now open), with the President, former First Lady Amelita Ramos (who has been the lead advocate all these years for the river's rehabilitation), Transportation Secretary Larry Mendoza and MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando leading government and private sector officials on board.

* * *

Recall that a smaller ferry project tried to take off years back but it didn't succeed. The new project proponents hope this one will gain support from the riding public because of the bigger boats and air-conditioned, comfortable terminals—and the worsening traffic on land. Starting today, for one week, all rides on the ferryboats will be free; but after that, each ride will cost P25 minimum, or P35 to P45, depending on the destination. (There will be season passes). I think the fare will be well worth the service which will be fast. But there should be regular trips that passengers can count on. One goal of our mass transport system is to reduce the volume of traffic on our highways. In this connection, Unilever's general manager, Howard Belton, told me yesterday that his firm uses barges on the Pasig to transport raw materials to its factory and he said each barge is equivalent to 40 hauler trucks on the road! The ferry project hopes to serve 30,000 people daily, equivalent to 600 busloads. It's really time.

* * *

Incidentally, Belton smilingly remembered that this columnist had been critical of the "Lovapalooza" kissing contest that he co-sponsored with the Manila government two years ago. I told him I still am, as there are far better ways by which RP's capital city can land in the Guinness Book of World Records. He agreed. But he also said that he'll be leaving Unilever soon after eight and a half years of managing it, and that he and his wife have agreed to retire here instead of in their native England, for two reasons: (1) "This country is beautiful and its people are so friendly"; and (2) His wife has a 90-year-old father and they can take care of him far better here than in the United Kingdom. Another case of expats falling in love with RP for good. There must be something here that oftentimes we locals, in our passion for negativism, entirely miss.

* * *

If efficient public transportation is crucial to our progress, making the cost of medicines affordable to the poor is even more crucial. The government, through the Philippine International Trading Corp., chaired by Roberto Pagdanganan (who'll soon run for governor of Bulacan), has been campaigning for cheaper medicines—an objective that can be achieved by importing generic drugs from abroad and by encouraging local production. But as I had written earlier, there is still the question of public confidence in the quality of cheaper drugs. Recently, that issue may have received a shot in the arm when Interphil, the Zuellig Group's pharmaceutical manufacturing arm, signed an agreement with PITC to produce right here some 20 off-patent drugs dealing with anti-hypertension, anti-diabetes and anti-infectives, at prices 50 percent cheaper than branded medicines. It was signed in Malacañang recently between Pagdanganan and Interphil president Francisco Billano. I call the entry of Zuellig into this crusade of making medicines affordable to the poor the "erstwhile missing factor" in "confidence-building." This multinational firm has had a long and proud heritage in the Philippines.

Activist lover

YOUNG BLOOD

Mong Palatino

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WE USED TO RIDE THE SAME BUS WHEN WE WERE STILL in grade school. She was always neat, prim and prepared for school, while I was always late and drowsy. Her brother was the laughable bully in our community church boys' group.

It was in college that I came to know her again. I was a sensational kid from the mighty campus of Diliman and she was the loudmouth of that old school along Padre Faura.

We exchanged furtive glances during the anti-Estrada rallies in 1999. The most memorable was the mammoth gathering in Ayala in August. I was with visiting Taiwanese students and she was the head of their school delegation. It could have been the heavy downpour or something else, but it was on that fateful day when I realized that I was smitten with the girl who used to mock me in elementary school.

The formal courtship took place in the picket lines of the Grand Boulevard Hotel. I was a lousy suitor (she has never made me forget that), but in time she had to admit her true feelings for me.

At first we thought we were a mismatched couple. After all, our interests are widely different. To cite a few examples: She prefers the rustic mountains, while I prefer the rugged seas. She adores Selena and TLC, while I appreciate the songs of Andy Williams. She is a talented artist; I'm more of a *filingerong artista*.

Our theory about our incompatibility would be disproved by our shared passion for the writings of Marx, Lenin, Mao, Stalin and Ed Villegas. The two of us are professional street ralliers, crowd control managers and advocacy experts. We both love pasta, Divisoria and Chinese movies.

But more than our fondness for the same things, one secret of our enduring relationship is our mutual respect or tolerance for our distinct interests. She agrees to watch "Eat Bulaga," "Mr. Bean," "Monk" and "Frasier" for as long as I also agree to watch Sarah Geronimo on "ASAP," "The Buzz" and "Will and Grace." She seldom complains about not being able to eat shrimp or crab meat because of my skin allergy, but I also have to give up *mongo* which she finds unpalatable.

I'm not really superstitious, but when we celebrate a special day in our relationship, something ominous or momentous occurs in the political life of the country. When Chavit Singson made his exposé against President Joseph Estrada, we were on vacation in the Hundred Islands in Alaminos, Pangasinan. When we celebrated our first anniversary, that was the week when Erap was arrested in his San Juan residence. When Magdalo soldiers attempted a coup in 2003, I had just proposed marriage to her. During the Valentine's Day bombing in 2005, she was in labor at the Philippine General Hospital.

Marriage brings so much pleasant complexities to a relationship. It is the most satisfying, if stressful, relationship in life. No more of those mushy love letters, phone conversations till dawn and text quotes every hour and promises of indescribable happiness if only the woman of your dreams would spend the rest of her life with you. They are replaced by bills from utility firms, phone conversations about getting home before 9 p.m. (or else...), text reminders to buy diapers and vitamins and the realization that you are stuck with this one person for the rest of your mortal life. But I believe, all this is what makes marriage exciting and enjoyable.

In the past week, my wife and I have had arguments and shouting matches about who would baby-sit, who would cook, who would clean the bathroom, how the money was spent, where were the keys, where was the remote control, etc. But at the end of the day, we resolved our petty quarrels. We can't sleep harboring any bitterness toward each other.

We have our own ways of expressing regret for something offensive said or done. On my part, I always offer a soothing back massage and ginger tea, do the dishes and mop the floor.

While the world continues to be more violent, unforgiving and depressing, I have found my happiness in life. I find comfort in the thought that another soul is dependent on mine in order to survive this wicked land.

Perhaps what inspires me to be a better person is the need to prove that I deserve to be blessed with a wife who tolerates my perverted humor, eccentric behavior and demented beliefs. I deserve a wife who irritates me every day with her complaints, but who is also affectionate, beautiful, intelligent and kind. The prospect of spending the rest of my life with this one person is the source of my contentment, pride and delight.

I tease, argue, fight, reconcile, serve, ridicule, adore, ignore, fear, loathe, respect, venerate and honor my wife every day. Some would say this is a regression to the boring domesticity called marriage. I say it is love. And love has a name: Frances.

Mong Palatino, 27, is the president of Kabataan Party List.

Ken Saro-Wiwa in my mind

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WHEN CNN REPORTER JEFF KOINANGA GOT near the place where he was supposed to meet with his interviewee Jomo Gbomo, spokesman of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), his boat was surrounded by boatloads of armed men. Men in black, wearing bonnets, brandishing big firearms and shooting into the air, prancing, dancing. This was enough to sow terror in the heart of even the most hardened of journalists.

I couldn't help recalling my own foray into the wilderness of Samar with a bunch of journalists. Using a motorized banca, we went through a heavily canopied river from the banks of which emerged heavily armed rebels who would lead us further into the wilderness and into the heart of a guerrilla movement. Into Tarzan territory, I called it. But we weren't supposed to be frightened. Our hosts made sure of that.

When I saw the CNN footage, I thought I had been there before. Except that this was the Niger Delta.

Were these armed men the ones supposed to meet with the journalist? Where was Jomo Gbomo? He was the one who supposedly did the inviting. Would he show his face? Would he emerge? Was this the right group? Jomo never got to present himself, but the armed men had a surprise for the journalist: 24 Filipino hostages, all looking forlorn, frightened and forsaken.

(Jomo would later call the journalist to say MEND was not the one holding the hostages.)

The Filipinos had been held captive since January in the Niger Delta. The oil-rich river delta is a hotbed of dissent. Various ethnic groups have been waging a struggle against Western multinationals and their own government for many years. Who are the legit freedom fighters, who are the bandits? Who are the true leaders, who are the mini-despots in the making?

Last week, CNN showed the 24 hostaged Filipino workers in Nigeria with their captors. Thanks to CNN reporter Koinanga, it was, I think, the closest any outsider got to them. It was a terrifying scene and I felt something in the pit of my stomach. The reporter was himself not sure how safe it was to get in and out of the place ruled by fragmented armed groups. Coming face to face with the hostages was a surprise. Being able to talk to them and get them to speak was a bonus.

Two days ago the Filipino hostages were set free. Two still remain in the hands of their captors. No ransom paid, the news report said.

Watching and reading about all these, I couldn't help but remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer, hero, martyr, who was hanged, along with eight others, on Nov. 10, 1995 in Nigeria. He had led the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Mosop) so that the government would heed their demands. He was hanged.

When Saro-Wiwa and the eight—all members of the Ogoni tribe—were hanged, Greenpeace issued a statement saying that they were hanged for speaking out against the environmental damage to the Niger Delta, caused by Shell Oil through its 37 years of drilling in the region. Saro-Wiwa was campaigning for the basic right to clean air, land and water; and his only crime was his success in bringing his cause to international attention.

Greenpeace said that Shell's call for "quiet diplomacy" at the 11th hour was not of any use. For Shell had ample opportunity to demonstrate concern when Saro-Wiwa was in detention and on trial. Instead, Shell chose to remain cozy with the Nigerian military dictatorship at that time.

The execution of Saro-Wiwa created ripples all over the world and, today, many environmental and literary groups hail him as a hero.

Here was what Saro-Wiwa said to the tribunal: "I repeat that we all stand before history. I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial. Shell is here on trial... Its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner than later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. The crime of the company's dirty war against the Ogoni people will also be punished."

Several times in 1993, Saro-Wiwa was arrested but he was adopted by Amnesty International as a "Prisoner of Conscience." The supposed reason for his arrest was that he had incited the youth to murder.

Since the change in government in 1998, both the government and the oil companies have acknowledged the problem of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta, but the environmental damage caused by oil exploration has not been fully addressed. Mosop continues to demand that Shell conduct an environmental assessment and do a cleanup.

As a writer, Saro-Wiwa had produced 27 books and had been honored for excellence in creative writing. He was a member of the Ogoni tribe, which is composed of some 500,000 people. The Ogoni live in the densely populated Ogoniland in south-eastern Nigeria.

Ogoniland has produced more than $30 billion worth of oil for Nigeria through the government's joint partnership with Shell. But the oil endeavor has resulted in severe pollution of Ogoniland.

Now the Niger Delta is described as "anarchic," meaning, that various groups have exploited the situation and the ones who suffer the most are the people.

The hostage situation pushed back Saro-Wiwa to my consciousness and I couldn't help imagining the cross-continental repercussions of the trouble in the Niger Delta. I thought, it could spawn a movie like "Babel," with the Filipino hostages taking center stage, their families in the Philippines sustaining the progression of the plot. And the oil companies...

It is sad, an eye-opener of a movie that is sad.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Evaluating candidacies

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THERE ARE THREE THINGS I WANT TO POINT out at the start of the campaign season.

First. Politics is a continuum, the way life is. We all evolve—or should. So do politicians. In politics, which marries ambition to public service and depends on people's money, reward and punishment is a two-way street. The politician may pander, even bribe or dissemble; and may be glib or ruthless. But in the end, so long as fraud is minimized, the politician is subject to promotion or ouster depending on the public's perception of his performance (capricious or not the judgment may be, but often not as whimsically arrived at as some tend to think).

It is precisely the times spent out of power, recovering from a stinging defeat, that can turn some politicians, when they return to power, into statesmen; in other cases, it at least restores their responsiveness to public opinion; just as slavishly obeying public opinion doesn't necessarily guarantee success at the polls. The idea that politics is a continuum, also explains why some politician's moves receive public support, and others don't.

Lito Banayo let loose a folksy saying on Dong Puno's show the other night, to explain why the public is more tolerant of people leaving any administration to join the opposition of the day, or is more admiring of those who doggedly stick to their guns: "It's like moving from the big, soft bed to the hard, cold, discomfort of sleeping on the floor." This also explains why it is a cardinal sin for any opposition member to abandon the minority for the comforts of being with the ruling majority.

Second. Politics is about both issues and personalities. Politics is a profession and, like any other sphere of human activity, it requires interpersonal skills. The presence or absence of these skills is a relevant guide to determining if a politician is worthy of support or not. Politics is built on communication, and the means of communication the public relies on determines what kind of communicating works.

The doctor with a good bedside manner will have more patients than a cranky, unpleasant doctor; and, often, people prefer a marginally less competent doctor to the one who may represent the pinnacle of his profession but who fails to inspire confidence or comfort.

It would be a great mistake to confuse the manner by which people absorb and digest issues with the absence of issues: the observer who does this assumes that because the issues aren't being communicated in the way the observer prefers, then there aren't issues at all! The issues are superficially discussed, some complain. But on a national scale, the issues will, by necessity, be broader: Do you have confidence in the administration, or not?

The perennial issues, observers say, in the Philippines, are graft and corruption and abuse of power. Not much is achieved, they say. But show me a country where the two aren't the core issues always? They are at the heart of politics. Power, which is what's contested in elections, can be so corrosive such that, periodically, those who possess it have to be challenged to justify their past and future stewardship.

Third. When a government is subjected to a referendum, the totality of its actions is what's being judged. A government, any government, will try to present its successes as the only issues that matter; the opposition will necessarily do the opposite. It is about punishment as it is about alternatives. And it is about applying the brakes as it can be about changing the driver. Every election is about regime change to one extent or another.

There are certain things about modern life—and running a modern state—that limit the options of those in power, or those who claim to wield ultimate power. Specifically, in recent years, we've seen that what a credit rating agency like Fitch or Standard & Poor says seems to matter more than what the Filipinos actually think. No one elected Fitch et al. Yet they have a veto power over both government and public opinion.

There has been little practical difference between the policies of every post-Edsa government because there are certain things no responsible government can abandon (devotion to the free market, private property, etc.) but each government emphasizes various programs differently, because each administration comes to power on the shoulders of a constituency, which it has to please to keep its hold on power. But even as it tries to do this, a government is regularly subjected to the judgment of all; and all things being equal, this means portions of the whole will have a larger role to play come election time than other parts of the whole.

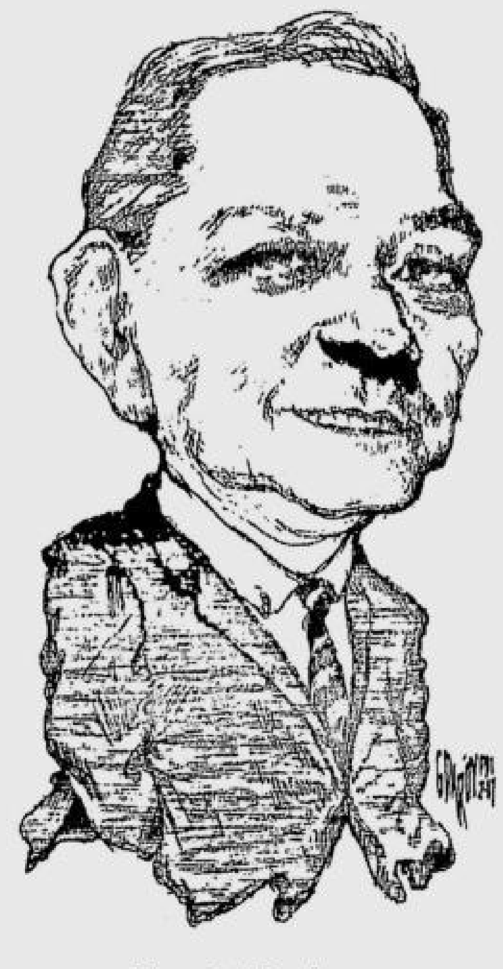
Which is why, for example, the middle class has more clout in between elections but less on election day itself: but what if it all evens out?

The worst thing I hear are members of the middle class whose instinct seems to be, to throw in the towel and informally boycott the elections. Such a move will not affect the outcome, but it places the middle firmly where the Palace wants: their votes un-cast, and no one in a position to contest those "votes."

Right or wrong, the committed make a stand. But those who neither participate nor show any commitment except to their own biases—the kind of people grumbling that the electorate is stupid, the candidates uninspiring, and both sides bad—add insult to injury by castigating the rest for their choices! That is what makes no sense at all.

Recall: the present administration galvanized public opinion, across socioeconomic classes, against it when the people saw it setting the stage for the scrapping of the 2007 polls. It was a brief moment of national unity clumsily, but effectively, defused at the last minute.

IN THE NEWS



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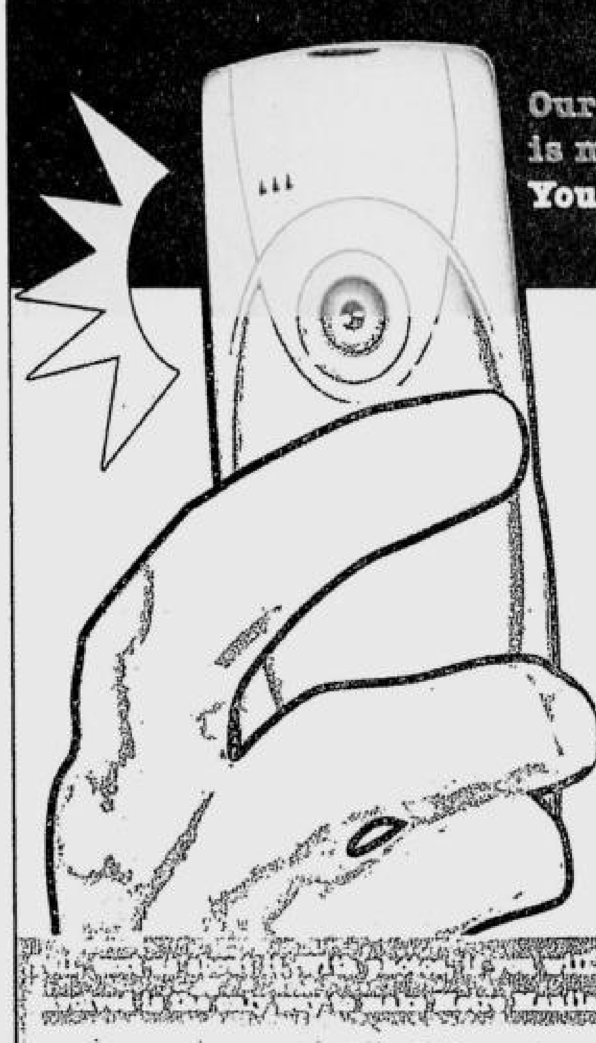

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INQUIRER

Wanted: a new Claro M. Recto

LAST FEB. 8, 2007 WAS THE 117TH BIRTH anniversary of Claro M. Recto, the first Filipino to wage a national crusade to make the Filipino first in his supposedly independent country.

In the neocolonial post-independence period, Recto spearheaded the campaign for the expulsion of the US military bases, which he considered intolerably offensive to our national sovereignty. Marshalling his legendary prowess as a lawyer to the service of the nation, Recto established beyond legal question the Philippines' ownership of vast land areas occupied by the US bases, defeating an expressed American claim embodied in the legal opinion of then US Attorney General Herbert Brownell Jr. Although credit for the actual removal of the bases belonged to Mt. Pinatubo, it was Recto's irrepressible sense of nation, spelled out in his inimitable prose, which set in powerful motion the movement to expel them.

In the economy, in which Americans enjoyed "equal" rights with Filipinos under the infamous Parity Amendment to the Constitution, it was Recto who sought to transform the import substitution strategy of development, which saw the rise of hundreds of factories in the country during the 1950s, into a program of nationalist industrialization. The goal was an industrialized economy owned and controlled by Filipinos.

Today, 47 years after his death, Recto hardly rings a bell to his countrymen, not because his nationalist vision has become irrelevant—for it is more relevant today than ever before—but because, in our country, sovereignty no longer resides in the Filipino people. Thanks to globalization, it now resides in the market, driven by greed and treason.

When will a new Claro M. Recto emerge?

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Suite 301, Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City

SSS still waiting for reply from claimant

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE LETTER OF Encarnacion Romero (INQUIRER, 2/1/07) on the alleged inaction by the Social Security System on her claim in connection with the death of her husband, Catalino Romero.

Based on the report submitted by our Pensions Processing Center, Encarnacion filed the claim with our Novaliches branch in 2004. She, however, failed to include one of the children, Ledeniana, who was listed by Catalino as one of his beneficiaries.

The SSS returned the application to Encarnacion via registered mail in November 2004 to her address in Camarin, Caloocan City. We requested her to submit the birth certificate of Ledeniana. On Jan. 11, 2005, the SSS sent a telegram to Encarnacion asking her to personally coordinate with our Members Assistance Center (MAC) here in Quezon City after the documents were returned by post. The SSS sent three more consecutive letters from July 2005 to February 2006 but Encarnacion failed to respond to any of them.

Last Sept. 13, 2006, the SSS received a letter from Encarnacion, together with the Baptismal Certificate of Ledeniana. She also informed the SSS that Ledeniana was the daughter of Catalino from his previous marriage. We wrote another letter to Encarnacion, requesting her to submit the death certificate of Inocencia Dema-ala, the first wife of Catalino and mother of Ledeniana.

On Nov. 28 last year, the SSS received a certification from the National Statistics Office declaring that a death certificate for Inocencia was not available. Along with it was a death certificate, which was marked "late registration" by the Local Civil Registrar in Cadiz City. According to the document, Inocencia died on Jan. 20, 1958. We again communicated with Encarnacion about Ledeniana. She wrote to the SSS last Jan. 24 saying she cannot locate Ledeniana. Instead, she told us to contact Chiba Plotena, the niece of Ledeniana.

Last Feb. 2, the SSS interviewed Chiba. She provided information about Adelfa and Alfonsa Plotena, children of Ledeniana. The SSS called up Adelfa and Alfonsa and asked them to coordinate with the nearest SSS branch and to submit an affidavit attesting that their mother died prior to Catalino's marriage to Encarnacion. The SSS is still waiting for a reply.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department,
Social Security System, Diliman, QC

Teves had no hand in T.E.V.E.S. formulation

IN HIS FEB. 8 COLUMN, CONRADO BANAL said that Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves was using the program with the acronym T.E.V.E.S (Tax Enhancement as Vehicle to Economic Stability) for his own political agenda. In fairness to the secretary, T.E.V.E.S. was introduced by Edgardo Pamintuan, former head of Malacañang's Office of External Affairs, when Teves was not yet around. Simply put, Teves was never involved, directly or indirectly, in the formulation of the program. When he took the helm of the Department of Finance, T.E.V.E.S. was already long in existence, albeit implemented irregularly.

However, a non-government organization, the Association of Socio-Economic Advancement for Pinoys (ASAP), in its desire to help the DOF and the Bureau of Internal Revenue increase tax collections, decided to pursue the program with the support and cooperation of the country's local government units. And Teves was invited to all the seminars, conducted jointly by the BIR and the LGUs, as guest to share his insights about the objectives, importance and benefits of the program. The resolve to implement T.E.V.E.S. now shows a stronger political will to improve the taxation system in the country.

Therefore, it is not fair to accuse Teves of using T.E.V.E.S. to advance his political agenda. In fact, the secretary had admonished me not to use the acronym as he may be misunderstood by the public, including the media. Sadly, the secretary has been proven right.

Rest assured, however, that despite this, I will continue to implement the program in cooperation with the LGUs to help the government raise more revenues for the Filipino nation.

I hope that this letter clarifies this concern of Banal.

—ROY SANGIL,
vice president, Association of Socio-Economic Advancement for Pinoys (ASAP),
Alabang, Muntinlupa City

Endorsement on behalf of KPB only

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE NEWS story written by Tarra Quismundo titled "UNO preempts 'Third Force,' announces 8 of 12 candidates." (INQUIRER, 2/1/07) The story mentioned the signing of the "Kartilya ng Kabataan," a youth covenant, last Jan. 31 at the UP Bahay ng Alumni—an activity which was spearheaded by the Kabataan Para sa Bayan (KPB).

I wish to point out, however, that KPB is not a coalition of groups like the Kabataan Party List, Sanlakas Youth and the College Editors' Guild of the Philippines. The groups/organizations, with San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and the KPB, were just signatories to the covenant, which is a commitment to ensure maximum youth empowerment and development.

Also, the endorsement toward the end of the program for the candidacy of Mayor JV Ejercito for the Senate was made on behalf of the KPB only.

—LLOYD IAN C. ZARAGOZA,
lead convenor,
Kabataan Para Sa Bayan

Payumo urged to help unmask 'mysterious buyer'

AS A RESIDENT OF CENTRAL LUZON, I can't help but be concerned about the unusual goings-on at the construction site of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, about which the INQUIRER has run several stories this month.

Former Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo seems to be taking up the cudgels for the farmers with regard to the Land Bank and right-of-way issue at Dinalupihan, Bataan. We advise him to dig a little deeper with these questions:

1. He said the "farmers have been waiting for payments for more than two years." He should investigate because the farmers have reportedly been paid and their lots already sold. This explains why they no longer have in their possession their CLOAs (Certificate of Land Ownership Awards). If the farmers don't have these documents, who must be holding them? Payumo is in a position to know who the real buyer is.

2. A certain Mr. Aguilar reportedly was given the special power of attorney to negotiate on behalf of the still unidentified buyer. Who is he fronting for? Is he holding the CLOA or is the CLOA now safely in the possession of a "mysterious buyer"?

3. If the three farmers are really "victims," as Payumo said, why aren't they complaining? These farmers are not even sore at the BCDA or anyone. Payumo may want to dig deeper so that he will find out who is really complaining. Is it the mysterious buyer who already paid for the three lots, but who in turn, could not sell such lots to the BCDA because of the unresolved "just compensation" case lodged by the landowner (Allied Bank) against Land Bank?

4. The two people who barricaded the property were not the farmers. Isn't it curious that two men, with no ownership or creditor claim whatsoever, were the ones who manned the barricades? Were they performing a patriotic act?

5. Finally, Payumo should tell us who sold the adjoining property to the BCDA. Could the mysterious buyer have taken the business risk of buying low from the farmers and selling high to the BCDA?

We wish to join Payumo in unraveling the truth and unmasking the mysterious buyer. But if the mysterious buyer could now come forward, it would help expedite the release of the documents to the farmers. Then this buyer can turn around and sell it to the BCDA. When all documentary requirements are met, the BCDA has no reason at all to delay the transaction. It's to the BCDA's interest that this right of way issue is resolved now.

I sincerely hope we can solve this problem ASAP so that construction of the SCTEX can go on without further delay—for the common good of the greater number of people.

—FRED ROXAS,
9 St. Jude Ave., Villa Julita,
San Fernando, Pampanga 2000

In yesterday's issue, the address (8 Tamarind Rd., South Forbes Park, Makati City) of Catherine Jones, the sender of the letter titled "When journalism and advertising get muddled," was inadvertently omitted. Our apologies.—Ed.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

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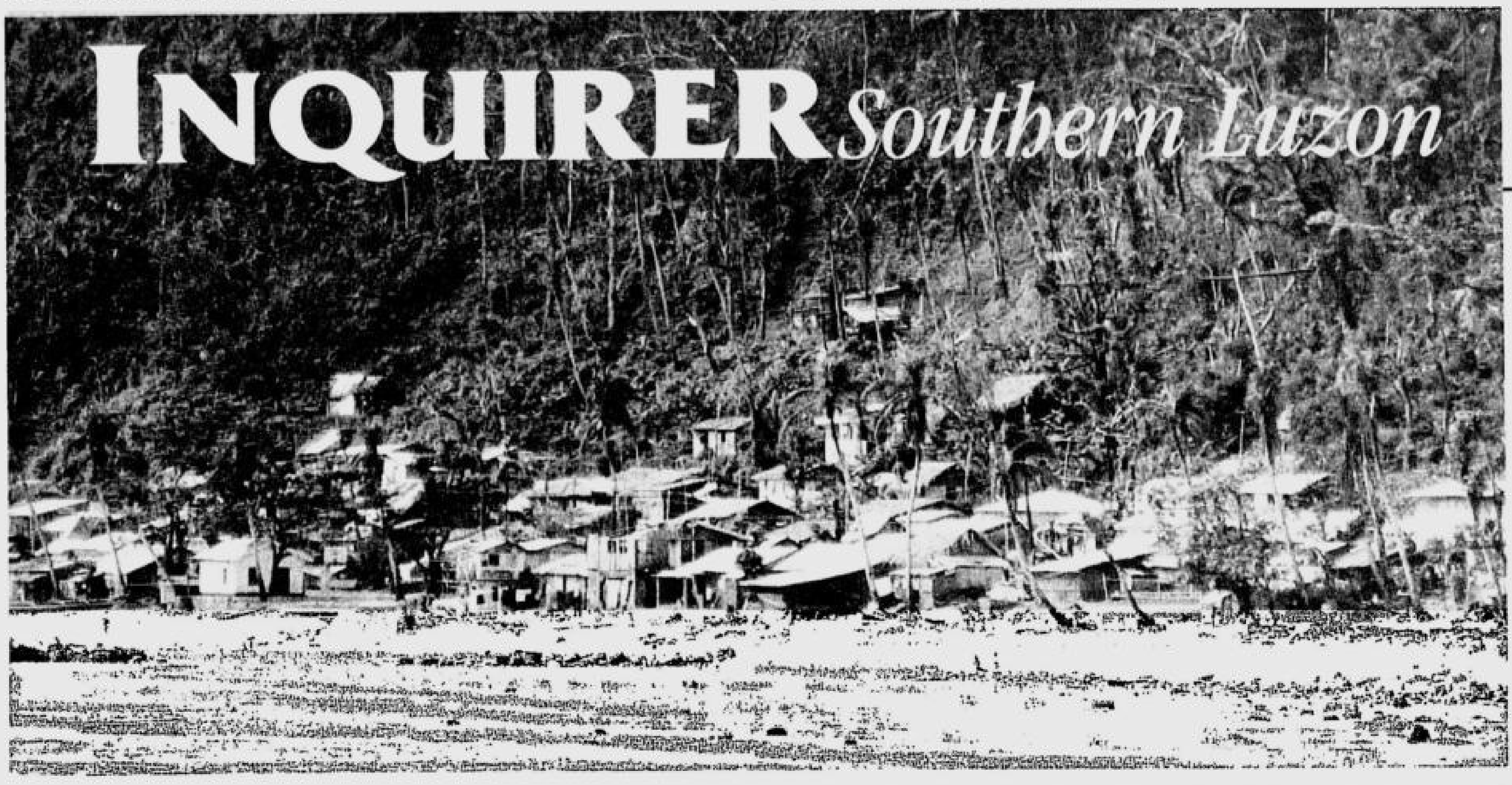


THE RESIDENTS near the mine site in Rapu-Rapu, Albay say they remain vigilant of Lafayette's mining operations. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Villagers watchful of Lafayette mining

By Ephraim Aguilar
Rapu-Rapu, Albay

VILLAGERS LIVING NEAR THE Lafayette mining site in Rapu-Rapu, Albay would commonly say that they remain vigilant despite their qualms about the government allowing the full resumption of the company's operations.

"Maybe there's nothing more we could do to oppose the mining. But we would be in favor of it, if only the mining process is done correctly," said Milo Asuncion, 47, councilor of Barangay Pagcolbon.

He said the residents were also afraid of the risks posed by the mining operations, especially during natural disasters, which may threaten fishing, their main source of living.

Aladin Valenzuela, 56, of Barangay Linao, however, said he was in favor of mining because it could give jobs to the villagers.

In fact, Valenzuela's 21-year-old son and nephew were jobless until they were hired as laborers for the mining site.

"I used to plant coconut and abaca but since the typhoons destroyed my crops I could no longer earn a living. We now rely on my son's earnings from Lafayette," he said.

However, there were not really many jobs created by the mining company in the community, he said.

"Many would apply and spend money for the application but only a few could be employed in the company," Valenzuela said.

Promise

For Asuncion, the mining company has yet to prove its sincerity in fulfilling its promise of development to the communities.

"They said they'd be putting up a water system in our village and create many jobs. But only a few of the many residents of Rapu-Rapu who applied for a job in Lafayette actually got employed," he said.

Carlos Dominguez, Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI) chair and president, said the company created around 1,000 jobs in Rapu-Rapu and fed more than 700 people every day.

The LPI earlier filed a petition for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to permanently lift the cease-and-desist order it issued against the mining operations following two mine tailings spills on Oct. 11 and 31, 2005.

The mining company was given 120 days of test run to prove that it is capable of responsible mining.

The fate of the much-disputed firm operating a copper and zinc mine at Barangay Pagcolbon was determined on Feb. 8 in a meeting of the DENR's Pollution Adjudication Board in Manila.

On that day, the mining firm was given the go-signal to resume operations by Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, Dominguez said the company was only partly thankful for the order to resume commercial operations.

"Our workers, suppliers and other business partners can now also look forward to the company's stability. The whole mining industry here and abroad have been watching and monitoring our progress and will definitely show heightened interest in the Philippines as an investment area," said Dominguez.

He said the company has met all the preconditions set by the government.

"We worked long and hard for this day. It's been more than a year since we, an all-Filipino team, took over management of the Rapu-Rapu project to institute all the needed reforms to transform it into a model of responsible mining."

Rally

Environmental activists, however, staged a rally in front of the DENR central office and shaved off their heads to protest "Lafayette's denudation of Rapu-Rapu island."

The Kalikasan-PNE, in a statement, called on the government to investigate the cause of reported mysterious deaths at Sitio Acal, some 15 kilometers away from the mining site.

Clemente Bautista, Kalikasan-PNE national coordinator, said the reported Sitio Acal deaths have been initially verified by field reports from the DENR-Bicol and the Rapu-Rapu Municipal Health Office documenting at least four persons dead and two sick.

According to the report, the fatalities include a certain JV Ebrada, 17 years old, with swollen legs and feet. Among the sick were a certain Victor Ebrada, 40, who had swollen legs and feet and Maribel Dorado, 22, whose entire body was swollen.

"We are not inclined to take deaths from local communities lightly, especially if these may be related to environmental problems," the group stated, adding:

"Whether or not the Lafayette mining operations is the culprit in the Sitio Acal deaths, we take this opportunity to assert that the real threat of heavy metal pollution on the local communities' health will remain and will intensify for as long as Lafayette mining is allowed to operate in Rapu-Rapu."

But Lafayette branded Kalikasan-PNE's allegations as "baseless and irresponsible" citing the mining site's 15-km distance from Barangay Mananao where the reported deaths occurred.

"Initial findings showed the deaths to have been caused by high fever or infection. Efforts to further verify these by getting official medical reports and death certificates are underway," Lafayette said in a statement.

It added that Kalikasan-PNE and other groups have used similar tactics in the past and somehow succeeded in using the media in scaring the people unnecessarily, sometimes with dire consequences on the poor.

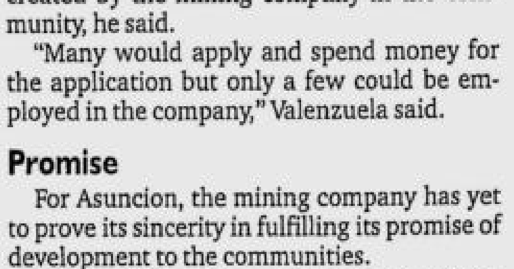
Copper and zinc

Marc Campos, senior vice president for production and commercial operations of the Rapu-Rapu Processing Inc. (RRPI), LPI's affiliate company, said they had spent about $60 million in compliance to the preconditions, including mitigation measures like the strengthening of the dam system, to prevent spills from happening again.

Within the 120-day test run, LPI had produced 1,400 tons of copper concentrate and 1,500 tons of zinc concentrate with a total value of $2.5 million, Campos said.

Lafayette had made its first shipment of 805 tons of copper concentrate to the United States with a total value of $1.8 million. It is now working on its second shipment of 700 tons of copper concentrate worth $1.1 million, said Manuel Agcaoili, RRPI president.

The mine, operating in an 18-hectare open pit, is capable of producing 30,000 metric tons of copper and 40,000 to 50,000 metric tons of zinc annually with monthly exports of about $7 million per month depending on the market price of copper and zinc.



ENVIRONMENTAL activists stage Valentines Day protest at the DENR main office in Quezon City Wednesday. They denounced the alleged heartless decision to resume Lafayette's mining operations in Rapu-Rapu. JOAN BONDOC

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- SUPERVISORY DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING
  February 19 - March 2, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAL COURSE
  February 19 - March 2, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- CREATIVE SALESMANSHIP AND CLIENT RELATIONS
  February 19 - March 2, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION
  February 20 - March 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- RECORDS AND FILE MANAGEMENT
  February 20 - March 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- PROJECT FEASIBILITY STUDIES
  February 20 - March 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEM EMPLOYEES
  February 17, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- ACCOUNTING FOR NON-ACCOUNTANTS
  February 24 - March 24, 2007 Saturday 9:00 PM - 12:00 NN
- HOW TO START A BUSINESS
  February 24 - March 17, 2007 Saturday 9:00 PM - 12:00 NN
- ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS
  February 17, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- HUMAN RELATIONS
  February 17, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT
  February 24 - March 10, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
  February 24 - March 10, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- MATERIALS MANAGEMENT
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- EXPORT BUSINESS AND COSTING
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- COST ESTIMATION FOR BUILDING CONSTRUCTION
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- PERT/CPM
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- QUALITY CONTROL
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- EFFECTIVE VEHICLE MANAGEMENT
  February 18 - March 4, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
  February 21, 2007 Wednesday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- PLANNING, DIRECTING, AND CONTROLLING THE WORK
  February 19, 2007 Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- MOTIVATION: THE KEY TO WINNING
  February 23, 2007 Friday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- STEPS IN BUSINESS FORMATION AND ORGANIZATION
  February 24, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- HOW TO DETECT AND PREVENT FRAUDS IN WAREHOUSE
  March 3, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- CONFIDENCE BUILDING & PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT
  February 19, 2007 Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- TRAINING PEOPLE ON PROPER TELEPHONE BEHAVIOR
  February 23, 2007 Friday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- INVENTORY PLANNING AND CONTROL
  February 25, 2007 Sunday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN

DIPLOMA IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT
  February 17, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATION
  Februry 24, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
- HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
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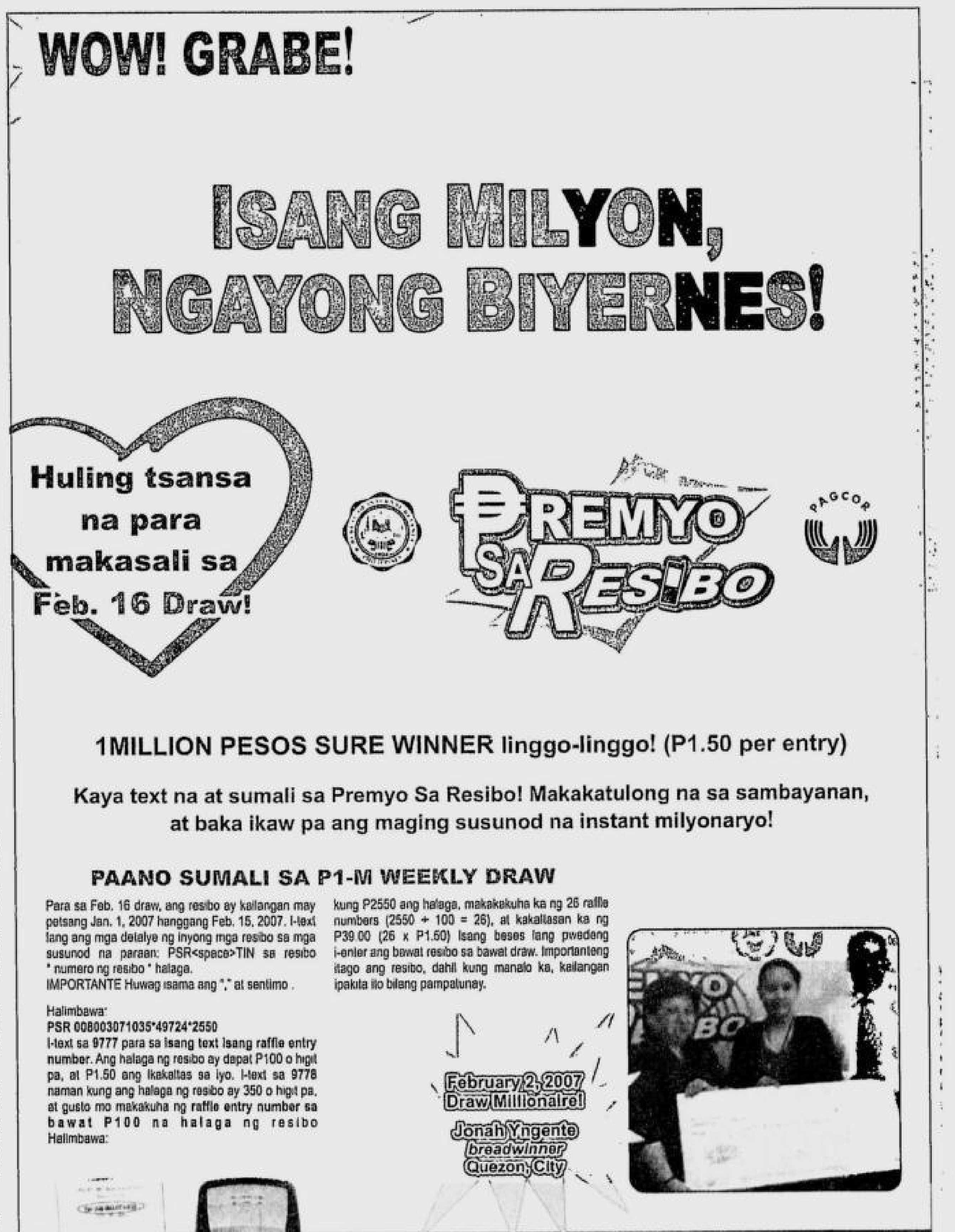
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₱500M in funds for irrigation diverted to new road projects

NAGA CITY—AT LEAST P500 MILLION IN FUNDS borrowed by the National Irrigation Administration meant for the repair of irrigation facilities are to be diverted to farm-to-market roads and NIA employees said they smell something fishy about it.

Antonio Reyes, head of the NIA Employees Association of the Philippines (NIAEASP), said the diversion of funds would sacrifice the government target for rice self-sufficiency and disregarded the original purpose for which the NIA borrowed P2 billion from the National Development Corp.

On Jan. 4, the NDC released P470 million to the NIA, as the third installment of a P2 billion loan that the NIA borrowed last year for the repair of irrigation facilities that service some 320,000 hectares of farms all over the country.

The first and second installments, amounting to P1 billion, were also released last year.

Reyes added that once the project was implemented, the NIA would release the funds to the Department of Public Works and Highways and the local government units that are implementing the project.

The NIAEASP president, who said he was present when President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the go-signal for the NIA to borrow from the NDC for the repair of irrigation facilities, said he had already conferred with NIA Administrator Arturo Lomibao regarding the NIA employees' opposition to the diversion of funds.

He said Lomibao assured him that the decision to divert the P500 million for irrigation facilities to farm-to-market roads has been approved by the NIA board.

Reyes quoted Lomibao as saying the diversion would "pump prime" agriculture activity.

Ed Yu, president of the NIAEAP district here, said the diversion of funds came amid the destruction of some P300 million worth of irrigation facilities after two super typhoons slammed into Bicol in November and December last year.

Yu said no single centavo had been allocated yet for the repair of destroyed irrigation facilities all over Bicol.

He said the NIAEASP has questioned the propriety of using the funds for farm-to-market roads when at least 1.3 million hectares of farms in the country, including those destroyed by typhoons, are in dire need of irrigation.

Yu said the NIA, since its creation as a government corporation, has so far irrigated 1.1 million hectares of the total target of 2.3 million hectares all over the country.

He said the process by which the funds would be used was also questionable. He said NIA employees are puzzle why the funds for the farm-to-market roads have to be coursed through the DPWH when the NIA has the capability to build these with its engineers and other technical people.

Yu said the original contract for the P2-billion loan signed between the NIA and NDC on May 11, 2006 did not include farm-to-market road projects. The contract was clear on the use of the funds solely for irrigation facilities covering 320,000 hectares of rice land.

He said the NIA used as its collateral for the loan its 2.8 hectare property in Quezon City, where its central office is. The loan was approved with that collateral.

But on Oct. 16, 2006, after Lomibao took over the reins of the NIA from former administrator Baltazar Usis, a new loan agreement between the NIA and NDC was signed.

Lomibao is a former police general appointed by Ms Arroyo to the NIA. He has said he is keen on running for a seat in the House of Representatives.

The new loan agreement, a photocopy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, has expanded the use of the P2-billion NDC loan to include farm-to-market roads and "other projects."

The NIA has also agreed to offset from the loan the P1 billion interim loan facility granted to it by the NDC.

The infrastructure projects under the NIA have been exempted from the ban during election period by the Commission on Elections. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

AT A GLANCE

- The original P2-billion loan contract, signed on May 11, 2006, specified the use of the money solely for irrigation facilities.
- On Oct. 16, 2006, former PNP chief Arturo Lomibao took over the NIA and a new loan contract was signed.
- The new loan agreement expanded the use of the P2 billion to include farm-to-market roads.

US soldiers arrive in Jolo for 'Balikatan'

JOLO, SULU—US MARINES AND sailors have started arriving here in preparation for the start of the Balikatan Exercises on Sunday (Feb. 18).

Maj. John Redfield, public affairs officer of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP), said the 200 US Marine soldiers and sailors will come from the Okinawa-based Third Marine Expeditionary Force and Naval Construction Battalion 3.

Also expected to arrive are American forces from the Hawaii-based US Army Pacific and Special Operations Command Pacific. "But these are only a few people, not nearly as many as the Marines," Redfield said.

Redfield said the American forces "will only perform humanitarian works like dental, medical, veterinary and engineering projects that will be carried out alongside with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)."

The medical team, he said, will not conduct clinical-medical and dental care missions in Sulu and in other areas of Mindanao like Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga City, Lanao Provinces, North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

In Sulu, Redfield said, humanitarian work will be focused on Barangays Bato-Bato and Buansa of Indanan town where a four-kilometer road will be constructed.

There will also be medical mission in the two barangays, while US forces will help in the renovation of a school in Bato-Bato.

In Tawi-Tawi, the foreign soldiers will build a pier and a boat ramp.

Yesterday morning, provincial officials led by Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong and military officials like Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo of the Joint Task Force Comet, welcomed the arrival of some troops who brought with them heavy equipment like loaders, compactors, graders, backhoes, dump trucks, flatbed trucks and semi-hauler trucks.

"We see more beautiful things coming in and happening here in our province. More and more developments are setting in for our people," Loong said.

The Balikatan Exercises will end on March 13.

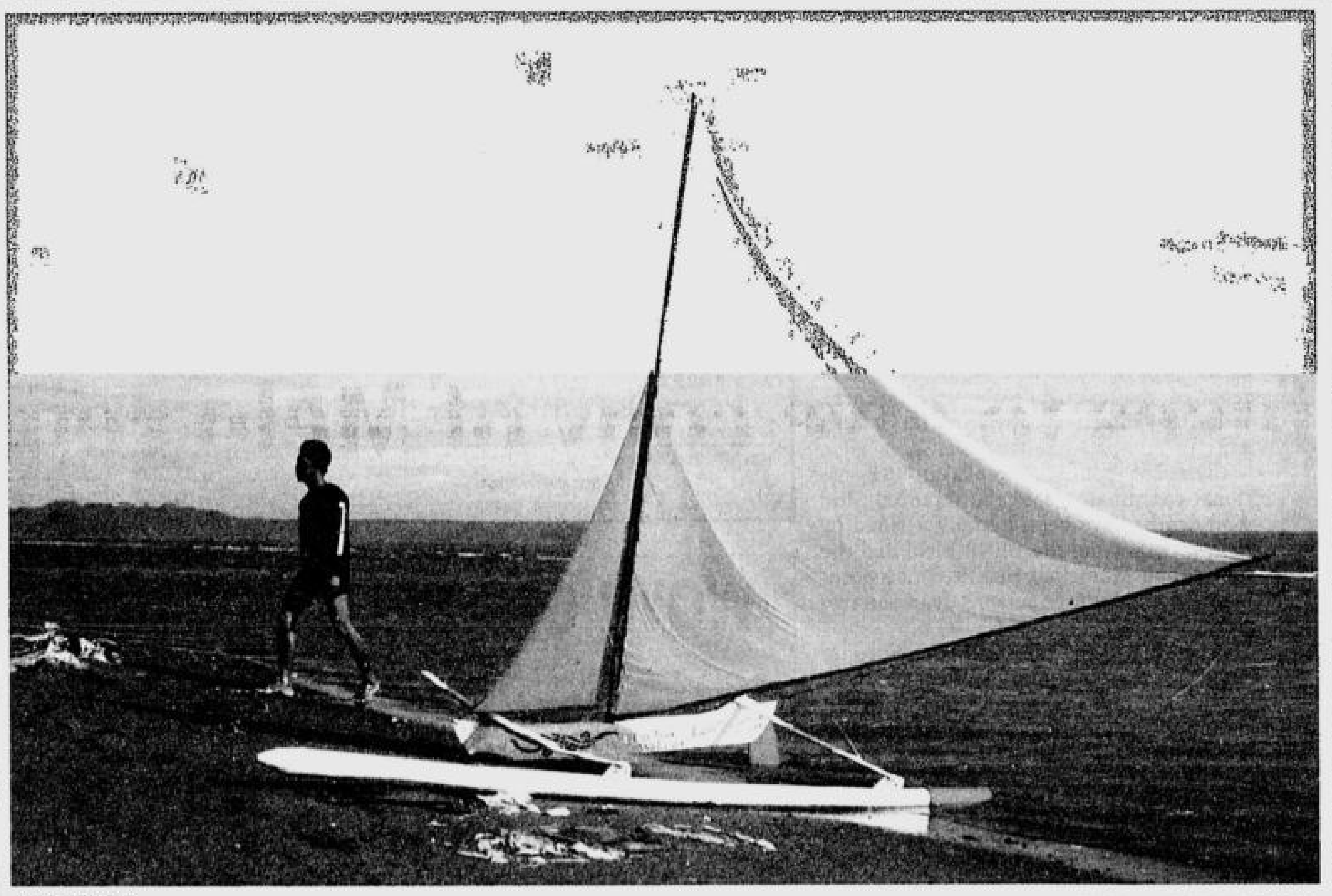
The arrival of the American soldiers comes in the wake of clashes between government forces and Moro guerrillas.

Hundreds of civilians fled their homes as fighting between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels erupted anew in Mamasapano town in Maguindanao on Sunday.

MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said soldiers fired howitzers at guerrilla positions in Sitio Manggapang in Barangay Manungkaling, forcing residents to flee.

Iqbal said the military also used three tanks and several militia units in the assault that lasted for about 30 minutes. There were no reported casualties on both sides.

"We defended our position," said Iqbal. *Julie Alipala with reports from Jeoffrey Maitem and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*



REGATTA

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

An Ilonggo pride, the *paraw*, is being prepared for a regatta in the Arevalo District of Iloilo City. Tourism officials are promoting the regatta as a crowd drawer and part of Iloilo's heritage and culture.

Troops get P90,000 for death, capture of escapees

COTABATO CITY—NORTH COTAbato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol on Tuesday rewarded an elite Army company with P90,000 for killing an escapee and capturing two others who bolted the provincial jail on Feb. 2.

The P50,000 was a reward for the slain fugitive, Indong Taligapen, and P20,000 each for the recapture of Lando Serrano and Johnny Maanib.

In a ceremony, Piñol handed over the amount to a team of the Reconnaissance Company of the 6th Infantry Division headed by 2nd Lt. Alex Escalante.

On Saturday, Escalante and his men clashed with the three fugitives and their armed coddlers in a remote village of Kabacan, North Cotabato.

Taligapen was killed, while his companions surrendered.

The other escapees fled with the armed group believed to be Pentagon kidnap gang members or Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas, according to Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, 6th ID spokesperson.

The escapees were among the 48 inmates, who were facing various criminal charges ranging from robbery to kidnapping to bombings, freed by armed men who raided the provincial jail.

Piñol reiterated his earlier directive to local police to shoot any escapee who would resist arrest. *Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Caution urged in pointing at wild birds as bird flu cause

LUCENA CITY—A CONSERVAtionist group based in the United Kingdom asked authorities not to be quick in pointing at wild birds as culprits in the spread of the bird flu virus.

"Authorities must work harder to present a balanced picture," said the Birdlife International, a group of conservationists based in the UK.

The group said the birds that were reported dead because of suspected bird flu in Hong Kong early last year and some of the cases reported this year were of birds found in urban areas or those that are not in their natural habitats.

"There is strong circumstantial evidence that these cases are associated with the deliberate release of captive birds for religious reasons," the group said.

"However, this hypothesis remains unconfirmed. Apart from these Hong Kong cases, no cases of H5N1 in wild birds have been confirmed since August 2006," it said in a statement.

The group said recent bird flu outbreaks this year in Hungary, South Korea, Japan and Thailand, and ongoing outbreaks elsewhere, especially in Indonesia, are also associated with commercial poultry production.

"There were no corresponding outbreaks among wild birds in these countries. The cause of the outbreaks in South Korea and Japan, which had been free of H5N1 since 2004, remains unknown," it said.

The bird protector also noted that in most other H5N1 outbreaks, there is strong circumstantial evidence that the movements of poultry and poultry products have been responsible.

"In many of these countries, poultry outbreaks occurred almost simultaneously in multiple large-scale poultry operations, indicating that migratory birds were an unlikely agent of the transmission," the group said.

The timing and location of these outbreaks do not match the movements of migratory birds, it said.

Avian flu or bird flu is a highly contagious disease caused by viruses that normally infect only birds. But the virus has since mutated and it is now causing infections or even deaths to humans.

The group maintained that even without additional evidence, the circumstances in the past and recent cases of avian influenza should have strongly suggested that other means of transmission were more likely. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Early election posters jar Baguio City folk

No to another
HELLO GARCI Scandal!
MPSTA -

TEACHERS express their sentiments at a meeting with Comelec officials in Manila.

REM ZAMORA

BAGUIO CITY—RESIDENTS woke up to find their neighborhoods awash with campaign posters on Tuesday, compelling the Commission on Elections here to investigate how the city fared on the first day of the national campaign.

Armando Velasco, Comelec director in the Cordillera, said his office was swamped with telephone calls informing him of violations.

Some of the reports had been confirmed, he said, although he did not say which senatorial or party-list candidates were responsible.

'Early bird'

He said the first posters indicated the "early bird" candidates were prepared to visit Northern Luzon soon.

"They are the ones we will talk to [about our special rules]. For example, we will need to remind them Baguio has a law prohibiting people from hammering nails, thumbtacks or even staple wires on trees in the summer capital," he said.

Most of the posters glued to walls, market stalls and even public utility jeeps and taxicabs here feature reelectionist Senators Manuel Villar, Panfilo Lacson and Edgardo Angara.

Some residents of the capital city of Malolos in Bulacan said they also found these same posters on walls and posts in their areas.

Theresa Eleogo, a former teacher, said those posters were not yet there on Monday night.

The posters were also plastered along the highway that leads to interior Cordillera.

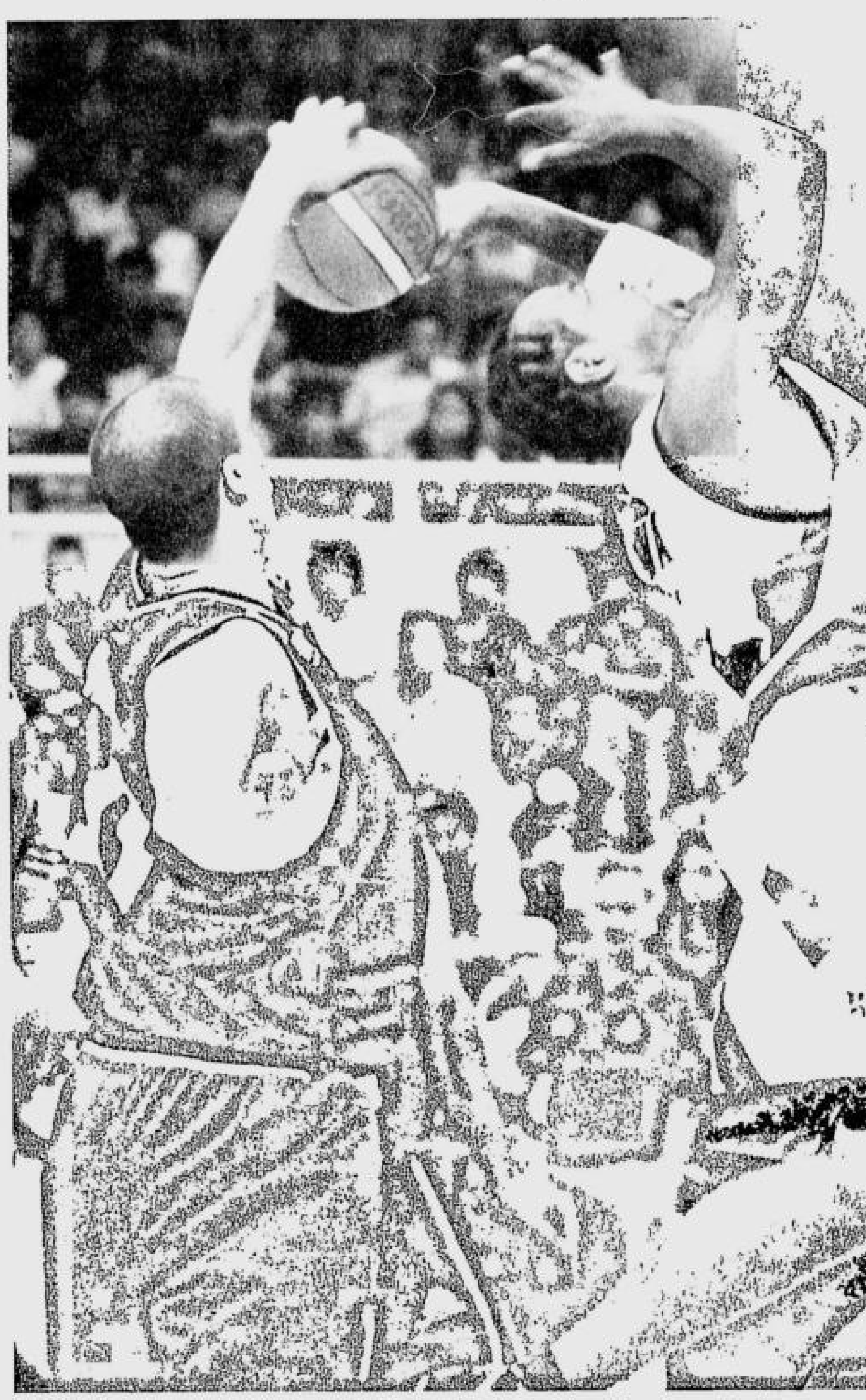
Velasco said they are preparing for March when local candidates also start campaigning.

Campaign

Bulacan's local officials have tried to skirt the ban on campaigning for local government positions by posting streamers wishing their constituents a "Happy Valentine's Day."

Bulacan Vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco, who earlier announced his gubernatorial bid, displayed tarpaulins containing Valentine messages two weeks ago. His posters also featured former actor Daniel Fernando, a provincial board member. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Reavis sparks Kings rally



ERIK Menk (left) makes his presence felt for Ginebra on the defensive end as he thwarts an undergoal stab by San Miguel's Dorian Pena. RYAN LIM

GAME TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
7 p.m.—San Miguel vs Barangay Ginebra

By Musong R. Castillo

A VENGEFUL JOB.

Rafi Reavis did more than what was asked of him last night and steered Barangay Ginebra back in the hunt in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup finals.

The reed-thin 6-foot-7 slotman scored 13 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in the breakaway third period to key Ginebra's 131-101 victory over San Miguel Beer at the jampacked Cuneta Astrodome that chopped down the Beermen's best-of-seven lead to 2-1.

It was a vindictive performance—and a winning one at that—coming from Reavis, whose two bungled free throws inside the final 24 seconds of Game 2 on Sunday helped doom the Gin Kings, 104-101.

The Gin Kings rode Reavis' third quarter output to a conference-best 43 points for the period which broke open a 56-55 game after Ginebra had trailed by as many as 10 points twice.

"He (Reavis) redeemed himself tonight," Ginebra coach Jong Uichico later said of his starting center, who finished with a total of 15 rebounds, nine of them off the offensive glass. "He got the rebounds for us and contributed (offensively)."

The win suddenly made a series out of this duel between two sister teams with the crucial fourth game scheduled tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Ginebra's total output was also a conference-high, and it put to rest questions whether the Kings have the firepower to win an old-fashioned shootout with such a talented squad like San Miguel, which took its worst loss in more than eight years.

"Now, we have a legitimate shot (at winning the series)," Uichico added. "If we win on Friday (tomorrow) and tie this up, the pressure will be on them (Beermen)."

Rudy Hatfield tossed in 28 points and had nine rebounds, leading a total of six Ginebra players in double digits, which included the slightly limping Eric Menk.

Menk, who was out for the entire semifinal series with Talk 'N Text and the series-opening 118-94 loss, saw action for 27 minutes and finished with 12 points, 11 rebounds and three assists while also intimidating his foes inside the paint.

Danny Seigle, roughed up for the second straight game, scored 20 of his team-high 26 points in the first two periods as the Beermen scooted away early and threatened to blow the game open.

But Hatfield and Caguioa scored a combined 19 points in the second period, and Jay-Jay Helterbrand, in his worthiest performance in the series, hit half of his 14 as the Kings closed out the half with a 56-55 lead.

Helterbrand, who leads everyone in assists with an 8.7 average, dished out 12 last night.

Caguioa actually scored 10 points in each of the two middle quarters, helping Reavis when the Kings totally broke away.

"The players knew that it (winning) was (needed) today or we have no more chance," Uichico added. "We were in a foxhole and the players were challenged because of that."

The scores:

BARANGAY GINEBRA 131—Hatfield 28, Caguioa 26, Tubid 19, Helterbrand 14, Reavis 13, Menk 12, Salvacion 9, Abarrientos 6, Holper 2, Mamaril 2, Macapagal 0.

SAN MIGUEL 101—Seigle 26, Tugade 25, Wilson 10, Racela 10, Tenorio 8, Calaguio 8, Pena 7, Hontiveros 5, Adducul 2, Espinas 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 23-26, 56-55, 99-81, 131-101.

Best Player race down to three

TWO SUPERSTARS from Barangay Ginebra and the irrepressible Danny Seigle of San Miguel seem the only ones left to crowd it out for the coveted Best Player of the Conference award of the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup.

Mark Caguioa, the tournament's leading scorer, and Rudy Hatfield, the season's leading rebounder, are the others in the mix.

The 6-foot-4 Hatfield is looming as the darkhorse in the voting that ended before the start of Game 3 of the championship series last night, which the Beermen are leading, 2-0, after a 104-101 decision Sunday night.

Seigle, the 6-foot-7 do-it-all San Miguel forward, is seeking to win a third BPC award and is actually looking to keep the trophy for the second straight time.

The San Miguel standout, whose first such accolade came in the 1999 Governors' Cup won by the Beermen, actually won this award last year even if the Beermen wound up just fourth.

The award will be given before Game 4 tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Meanwhile, the PBA is set to launch a noteworthy program aimed at promoting a healthy community and citizenry.

The project titled "PBA Kasama Mo Wellness Campaign," will be formally presented on Feb. 17 at the Cavite Coliseum, in Bacoor, Cavite from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"The PBA has always been supportive on this kind of endeavor as the league not only promotes the value of sports but also physical fitness," said league commissioner Noli Eala.

Among the key aspects to be stressed during the "PBA Wellness Campaign" include good nutrition, anti-drug/no smoking campaigns and physical fitness.

Palace refuses to give copy of Melo report

From page A1

groups, had expressed doubt on the commission's independence and ignored its invitation.

Alston and his team have been kept busy meeting with officials and members of the Armed Forces, the defense department, the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig, and the Melo Commission.

He had a meeting with Ermita at the Palace on Monday, where the latter pledged the cooperation of the Arroyo administration, including "all the information that [Alston and his team] need, short of allowing them interference in our court system."

Overview of insurgency

Ermita said Palace officials had given Alston, who is here on a 10-day visit, a briefing.

"We talked about his purpose for coming to the Philippines," Ermita said.

He said he had to give Alston "an overview of the insurgency," to "look at the issue of extrajudicial killings in the context of the overall insurgency problems in the Philippines"—a reference to the 38-year communist insurgency and the Moro secessionist movement in the south.

Ermita said this gave Alston a good background "on why these things are happening."

He said he also told Alston and company that the AFP was using the term "unexplained killings" to refer to the murders.

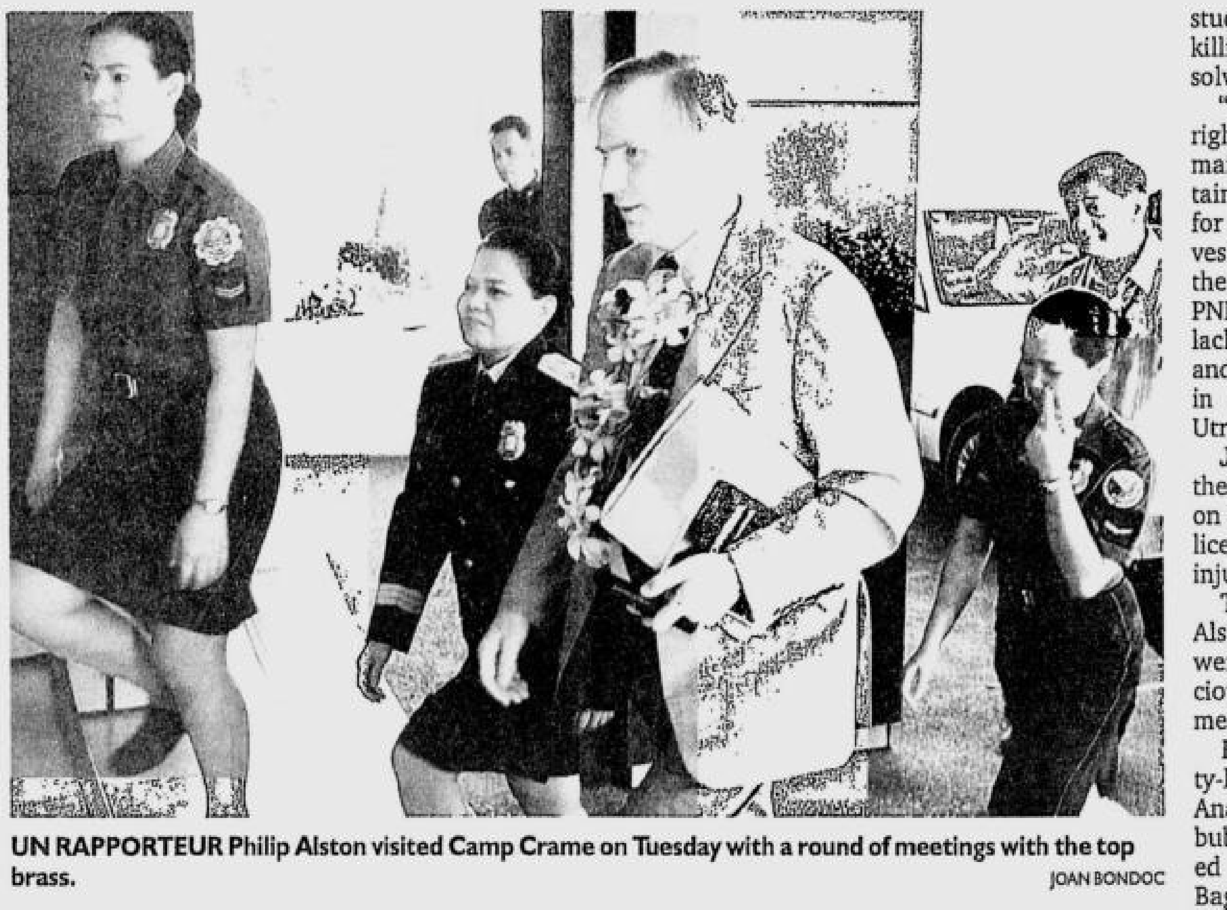
GMA's CHR

Ermita said Alston's inquiry into the killings was being supported by Ms Arroyo "for purposes of transparency, to show them that the government under the President is doing everything to address this."

The EU, which has repeatedly expressed alarm at the unabated killings, will also conduct its own probe. But it had said it needed a copy of the Melo report to do this.

Asked if Alston's inquiry would open the proverbial can of worms, Ermita said: "I always say that the truth will always come out."

He also said Alston had been shown "pictures of mass graves" of civilians and communist cadres believed to have been executed by the communist New People's Army.



UN RAPPORTEUR Philip Alston visited Camp Crame on Tuesday with a round of meetings with the top brass. JOAN BONDOC

"It's up to [Alston] how he will look at it ... and make his own assessment," Ermita said.

Ermita also announced that Ms Arroyo had named Cecilia Quisumbing, daughter of Supreme Court Justice Leonardo Quisumbing, executive director of the President's Committee on Human Rights, which Ermita heads.

The young Quisumbing has worked for the broadcast network CNBC and served as the Philippine consultant to the UN mission involved in human rights.

Ermita told reporters Ms Arroyo was convinced that Quisumbing, "being like you a journalist, and a foreign journalist at that," would be "very helpful" as the committee's executive director.

Tearful accounts

Yesterday, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings met with survivors and relatives of the victims, according to Ruth Cervantes, spokesperson of the rights group Karapatan.

The Associated Press quoted Cervantes, who attended the meeting, as saying that Alston had met with about 20 relatives of slain leftist activists.

The venue of the meeting was not disclosed to protect the complainants, AP said.

Cervantes said activists gave Alston's team a briefing on alleged human rights abuses under the Arroyo administration. Then the victims started to recount the attacks, some breaking into tears, Cervantes said.

Among them was Josie Javier, who was shot with her husband in their rural home north of Manila last October by suspected soldiers, who resented his membership in a left-wing urban poor group. Javier's husband died in the attack.

"As I think of my husband this Valentine's Day, I hope that Mr. Alston really listened to our story and will do everything in his power to give us justice," Javier said in a statement.

The victims had sought the meeting with Alston in an effort to urge the UN and other foreign groups to pressure Ms Arroyo to take drastic steps to halt the killings, Cervantes said.

She added: "The victims have gone to the courts, Congress and the CHR (Commission on Human Rights), but the killings have not stopped."

Karapatan has listed 832 summary killings, including 356 leftist activists, since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001. But the administration has disputed the figures and blamed many deaths on purges within the communist movement.

NDF too

Even officials of the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, wants to meet with Alston in their base in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

The invitation was contained in a letter hand-delivered to Alston in Quezon City yesterday by the staff of the NDF-Joint Secretariat.

In the letter, NDF negotiation panel chair Luis Jalandoni said Alston and his team could meet with other NDF negotiators and monitors in Utrecht "to discuss matters of mutual concern regarding the human rights situation" in the Philippines.

Jalandoni also gave Alston a study of 23 cases of extrajudicial killings that have yet to be resolved.

"The submission of human rights groups are supported mainly by fact sheets which contain enough material information for conducting an impartial investigation by concerned parties; the submission by the AFP and PNP representatives are woefully lacking in supporting documents and information," Jalandoni said in a statement issued from Utrecht.

Jalandoni also lamented that the 23 killings had been blamed on the CPP/NPA/NDF by the police and military, causing "grave injustice to the victims."

The 23 cases in the study given Alston included 17 victims who were members of groups "viciously vilified" by the government, Jalandoni said.

He said these included the party-list groups Bayan Muna and Anakpawis, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and affiliated peasant organizations, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Karapatan, United Church of Christ of the Philippines, and Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR).

Military document

The AFP is not lacking in papers.

On Tuesday, defense and military officials gave "reference materials" to Alston during a briefing at Camp Aguinaldo.

The military said that the CPP-NPA was behind the liquidation of 1,335 persons from 2000 to 2006 and that most of these incidents happened in communist-infested areas of Bicol, Central Luzon, Southern Mindanao, Eastern Visayas, Southern Tagalog and Caraga.

According to the military document, many of those killed, or 650, were civilians or ordinary citizens; 499 were military and police personnel; and the rest were former rebels and rebel returnees and government officials.

Of the 111 local government officials, 64 were purported barangay chairs of "communist-affected or threatened barangays."

The document said 336 other persons were killed for failing to give in to the communists' extortion demands; for suspicion they were government informants; and for malversation of funds of the movement, among others.

It also said the CPP had conducted purging operations from 1986 until the 1990s.

"The areas where the purging occurred are the same areas that are currently experiencing a high level of unexplained killings," it said.

'Look, listen, judge'

But the Church-based PCPR called on Alston not to be "fooled" by Palace, police and military officials.

"Look, listen and judge beyond the Malacañang-AFP-PNP cover-up on state accountability over the 833 cases of political killings under Arroyo," the PCPR said in a statement.

The group said it had received reports that the killing of Aglipayan Bishop Alberto Ramento on Oct. 3, 2006, was supposedly cited as a robbery case during one of Alston's meetings with government officials.

It maintained that Ramento was killed, not by thieves, but by "state agents ordered to eliminate groups and personalities advocating regime change."

"As we have [written] Mr. Alston earlier, the fact that Bishop Ramento and 23 other church people were not spared is a glaring manifestation of an extreme level of state repression," the PCPR said.

Challenge Senate bets

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano challenged both administration and opposition senatorial candidates to publicly condemn the killings.

"We are already on the second day of the 90-day campaign period and we have yet to hear the stand of senatorial candidates on [this matter]," Mariano said.

He said the network of the leftist party-list groups in the grass roots would work in favor of senatorial candidates who would speak out against the killings." *With reports from AP, Jerome Aning, Nikko Dizon and, Norman Bordadora*

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ALONE TOGETHER
The lush scenery lured this couple, along with many others, to spend Valentine's Day in the peace and quiet of the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Nature Center in Quezon City.
JOAN BONDOC

DID YOU KNOW

TODAY, Feb. 15, marks the 119th birth anniversary of Victor Buencamino, the first Filipino veterinarian. The Tondo native graduated in 1911 from the New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University. He was also the first Filipino to head the Bureau of Animal Husbandry (1933 to 1936), and the first Filipino president of the Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (1919).
Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

WINNING IN THE 2007 ELECTIONS **(Feb. 27, 2007)** SPEAKERS: REUBEN M. YAMBOT, PR Practitioner & Political Consultant, Author, How to Win in the 1992 Local Elections: *The Effective Campaign Team & Platform;* ATTY. ROLANDO C. RAMIREZ, Legal Counsel, PMP: *Making Your Campaign Strategy Work;* ALBERT LIM, Political & Legislative Consultant: *Dynamics of Web Based/ICT Campaigns & Data Mining;* TONY C. CONCEPCION, SR., PR & Management Consultant: *Applying Sun Tzu's Art of War in Your Campaign; How to Counter Cheating. Case studies.* Venue: Richville Hotel, 286 EDSA, Mandaluyong City, 8am-5pm. Get a 10% early bird or group discount. To register, call Leading Edge Forum for Excellence, Inc. at 578-9833; 531-0084 or CP: 0919-229-9777; 0919-229-9780; 0915-780-4379 or email at: tritium@pldtdsl.net or leffeinc@yahoo.com. Buffet lunch w/ snacks & flowing coffee. Limited seats only. Register Now!

Firms lose payroll money to thieves

Bike-riding robbers pull heists

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO COMPANIES LOST ALMOST P1 MILLION in payroll money to motorcycle-riding thieves in separate incidents yesterday.

In both instances, the suspects were three men on board a motorcycle.

The first incident happened at noon in Marikina City, involving Loel Martin, logistics assistant of RS Developer Company; his coemployee Daniel Oracion and company driver Larry Ocampo.

The three were on board a Nissan pickup and on their way back to the company's office in Barangay Nangka when they noticed three men on a motorcycle tailing them.

When the victims were on Gil Fernando Avenue, the robbers suddenly blocked their path. Two of the suspects got off the motorcycle and shot the front tire of the pickup.

They then aimed their guns at the victims and asked them to open the vehicle's doors. When the victims complied, the robbers grabbed P400,000 in payroll money the three had just withdrawn from the Metrobank branch in Barangay San Roque.

The incident was the sixth robbery in the eastern part of the metropolis involving three robbers on board a motorcycle. All the other victims had also just withdrawn big amounts of money from a bank.

In Malabon City, Eufracio Lasagas, a messenger of NDC Terminal Inc. located on Dagat-dagatan Street in Navotas, lost nearly P550,000 to three men on board a motorcycle at around 2:30 p.m.

According to Lasagas, the money was intended for the salaries of the company's employees in Manila and in Davao City.

He told the police that he had just come from the bank with the company's operations manager, Arnel Santos, when three men blocked their pick-up truck on Dr. Lascano Street, about a kilometer away from the bank.

"Two men went down and at gunpoint, took my bag containing the money I withdrew from the bank worth P542,700." Lasagas told the INQUIRER.

He added that the suspects did not even try to hide their faces. "I can identify them when I see them," Lasagas said.

PO3 Peter Rios of the Malabon City police investigation unit said they were looking into the possibility that the holdup incident in the city and nearby areas were carried out by a single group because the criminals had the same modus operandi.

Two weeks ago, the Eastern Police District promised it would intensify the deployment of motorcycle-riding policemen in response to the spate of highway robberies in the area.

One of the investigators said they would compare yesterday's incident in Marikina City with previous cases reported in nearby Pasig City amid speculations only one group could be behind the rash of attacks.

The Marikina City Police was cited on Monday as the best police station under the EPD which has jurisdiction over the cities of Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong and the town of San Juan.

In all of the six highway robberies reported in the eastern metropolis in the last three months, the robbers apparently tailed the victims from the banks, investigators noted. The robbers also knew the victims were carrying big sums of money, leading officials to believe the suspects could also be getting some help from those privy to bank transactions.

Twelve days ago, three motorcycle-riding robbers escaped with P2.8 million after robbing employees of the ARRHA Export Business who had just come from an Equitable-PCIBank branch in Pasig City.

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Cops say it with roses and chocolates at MRT

By Julie M. Aurelio

FEMALE COMMUTERS WAITING for the train at the Metro Rail Transit Ayala station yesterday afternoon received a pleasant surprise: Long-stemmed roses being handed out by a high-ranking police official.

Deputy Director General Reynaldo Varilla, National Capital Region Police Office chief, also distributed chocolates to women passengers while greeting them a Happy Valentine's Day.

Varilla was at the MRT Ayala station to check on security measures being implemented by the rail transit management.

"We wanted to make passengers remember that they got flowers and chocolates on Valentine's Day, and not the bombings that happened two years ago," public information officer Supt. Rommel Miranda told the INQUIRER.

The NCRPO has been on heightened alert because of the 2005 Valentine's Day bombings that killed seven people in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao.

Varilla was accompanied yesterday by Quezon City Police District director, Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, and Supt. Roberto Rosales, Southern Police District chief.

Both also joined Varilla in distributing roses and chocolates to women passengers.

The three officials later boarded the MRT and alighted at the Araneta Center station in Cubao, Quezon City.

Varilla was supposed to inspect bus terminals in the area but left after turning over the task to Gatdula.

According to Miranda, they wanted to make commuters feel more secure with the presence of policemen in vital installations in Metro Manila.

He also denied an INQUIRER story on a bomb plot that was supposed to be carried out yesterday by the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf Group and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

According to a memorandum issued by Varilla, intelligence information revealed that MILF's special operations group, the ASG and its affiliate, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, would attack an undisclosed area in Makati and the Plaza Fair department store in Zamboanga "on or before" Valentine's Day.

Miranda confirmed that Varilla did issue a memorandum but only to order that the NCRPO police be placed on heightened alert status on the anniversary of the Valentine's Day bombings and "because the campaign period has already began."

He added that "there was no direct and specific information" that Makati and Zamboanga would again be the subject of terror attacks.

NCRPO chief Reynaldo Varilla (center) and other police officials revisit the site of the Valentine's Day Makati bombing which occurred two years ago. EDWIN BACASMAS

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
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3	ROE FERRER	Fundado, Labo, C. Norte	2.2298	T-19378
4	ROE FERRER	Fundado, Labo, C. Norte	5.0865	T-19379
5	ROE FERRER	Bagacay, Labo, C. Norte	1.2549	T-19376
6	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	2.4460	T-20458
7	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	3.5181	T-20459
8	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	6.9961	T-20457
9	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	0.5296	T-20456
10	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	7.2665	T-20455
11	FERNANDO GUZMAN & ALVIN GUZMAN	Dalas, Labo, C. Norte	4.5601	T-20454
12	MARCIAL ALMADRONES	Napaod, Labo, C. Norte	4.9565	P-223
13	DAMASA BALCE	Napaod, Labo, C. Norte	4.9565	044-0146
14	ANTONIO CERENO	Daquit, Labo, C. Norte	19.4167	T-5196
15	DBP/Rosalina P. Rayos	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte	2.0324	T-26090
16	DBP/Rosalina P. Rayos	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte	9.0869	T-26091
17	DBP/Rosalina P. Rayos	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte	8.0675	T-26092
18	DBP/Rosalina P. Rayos	Sto. Domingo, Vinzons, C. Norte	17.1073	T-26093
19	HERMINIO BALCE/PABLO VEDAD	Calangcawan Norte, Vinzons, C. Norte	5.3577	P-5205
20	CARMINDA Z. BALCE	San Agustin (now Aguit-it), Vinzons, C. Norte	8.0000	T-23583
21	MARIXSA Z. BALCE	San Agustin (now Aguit-it), Vinzons, C. Norte	8.0000	T-23581
22	SIGFREDO Z. BALCE	San Agustin (now Aguit-it), Vinzons, C. Norte	7.5100	T-23584
23	DAMASO PIMENTEL	Banocboc, Vinzons, C. Norte	8.8902	T-1794
24	RAMON TRINO ZENAROSA	San Agustin (now Aguit-it), Vinzons, C. Norte	21.5851	T-14759
25	GLORIA, NORMA & SERGIO JR., all surnamed CRISOSTOMO	Calasgasan, Matnog, Basud, C. Norte	5.7422	T-15214
26	SPS. JUANITO ELEAZAR & ILUMINADA O. ELEAZAR	Mocong, Basud, C. Norte	6.1071	T-46822
27	CENON DIZON	Angas, Basud, C. Norte	8.0000	T-1791
28	JUANITA AVILA VDA DE MORENO	Mocong, Basud, C. Norte	8.2914	T-2831
29	DELFIN LAVAREZ	Tacad, Basud, C. Norte	8.9860	T-3649
30	ROSEMARIE COOTAUCO	Mocong, Basud, C. Norte	6.7901	T-14346
31	ROSE MERCADO ELEP	Tacad, Basud, C. Norte	7.4209	T-17837
32	ERNESTO RAMOS	Plandel, Basud, C. Norte	6.0805	T-22353
33	ROGELIO ABRERA	Binatagan, Basud, C. Norte	6.3382	T-14126
34	ROGELIO ABRERA	Binatagan, Basud, C. Norte	4.6398	T-14125
35	BERNADINE DEL ROSARIO	Matnog, Basud, C. Norte	6.4642	T-19570
36	DEMETRIO BENSA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	10.1389	P-1898
37	MARCIAL PIMENTEL	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.4017	T-10354
38	VELIA IBASCO	Daculang Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.7550	P-9987
39	VELIA IBASCO	Daculang Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	2.7062	P-2203
40	LOURDES FIRMANES VEGA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	12.4667	P-2640
41	SPS. MARCELINO MALATE & PRIMITIVA MERCADO	Salvacion, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.1968	T-20191
42	SPS. MARCELINO MALATE & PRIMITIVA MERCADO	Salvacion, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	3.5471	T-20192
43	PEDRO DYLOCO	Mampurog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.6465	T-7327
44	PEDRO DYLOCO	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.8121	T-7466
45	SYLVIA & YOLANDA PIMENTEL	Mampurog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	47.7534	T-14489
46	VICTOR RICAFRENTE	Asdum, San Vicente, C. Norte	9.8076	T-12251
47	FE ALEGRE	San Jose, San Vicente, C. Norte	13.9290	T-15414
48	ADELIA ATIENZA	Cabanbanan, San Vicente, C. Norte	7.5430	T-13590
49	CARMELITA ATIENZA	Cabanbanan, San Vicente, C. Norte	8.0469	T-13586
50	AMELIA TECSON	San Jose, San Vicente, C. Norte	10.1790	T-22598
51	RONALD ANTHONY TIMONER	Daculang Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	2.0000	P-11467
52	PLACIDO TORRERO, SR.	Iraya Sur, San Vicente, C. Norte	11.1761	T-13142
53	MANUEL LOPEZ	Laniton, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	23.6617	014-0389
54	GEORGE VEGA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	12.9312	P-2642
55	EUGENIA PAROLE	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	10.6135	P-1135
56	GLORIA, NORMA & SERGIO JR. all surnamed CRISOSTOMO	Calasgasan, Daet, C. Norte	0.7020	T-15224
57	JAIME KING, JR.	Mambalite, Daet, C. Norte	8.0001	T-8869
58	LOURDES GARCIA	Dogongan, Daet, C. Norte	0.6138	T-15350
59	ROSITA VARIN MARCELO	Sta. Cruz, Talisay, C. Norte	5.9137	T-55204
60	ROSITA VARIN MARCELO	Sta. Cruz, Talisay, C. Norte	0.5418	T-55208
61	ROSITA VARIN MARCELO	Gabon, Talisay, C. Norte	0.1296	T-55207
62	GEORGE KING	Sta. Cruz, Talisay, C. Norte	1.6074	P-8166
63	GEORGE KING	Sta. Cruz, Talisay, C. Norte	7.1634	P-8937
64	BEATRIZ VELEZ	Cobangbang, Daet, C. Norte	9.1822	T-7696
65	DEMETRIA BENSA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	10.1389	P-1898
66	MARCIAL PIMENTEL	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.4017	T-10354
67	VELIA IBASCO	Daculang-Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.7550	P-9987
68	VELIA IBASCO	Daculang-Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	2.7062	P-2203
69	LOURDES FIRMANES-VEGA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	12.4667	P-2640
70	SPS. MARCELINA MALATE & PRIMITIVA MERCADO	Salvacion, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.1968	T-20191
71	SPS. MARCELINA MALATE & PRIMITIVA MERCADO	Salvacion, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	3.5471	T-20192
72	PEDRO DYLOCO	Mampurog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.6465	T-7327
73	PEDRO DYLOCO	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	4.8121	T-7466
74	VICTOR RICAFRENTE	Asdum, San Vicente, C. Norte	9.8076	T-12251
75	FE ALEGRE	San Jose, San Vicente, C Norte	13.9290	T-15414
76	ADELIA ATIENZA	Cabanbanan, San Vicente, C. Norte	7.5430	T-13590
77	CARMELITA ATIENZA	Cabanbanan, San Vicente, C. Norte	8.0469	T-13586
78	AMELIA TECZON	San Jose, San Vicente, C. Norte	10.1790	T-22598
79	RONALD ANTHONY TIMONER	Daculang-Bolo, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	2.0000	P-11467
80	PLACIDO TORRERO, SR.	Iraya Sur, San Vicente, C Norte	11.1761	T-13142
81	MANUEL LOPEZ	Laniton, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	23.6617	014-0389
82	GEORGE VEGA	San Ramon, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	12.9312	P-2642
83	EUGENIA PAROLE	Maisog, San Lorenzo Ruiz, C. Norte	10.6135	P-1135
84	RICARDO GLORIA	Kagtalaba, Sta. Elena, C. Norte	13.5685	P-17750
85	ROBERT PAL DEAUNA	Casalugan, Paracale, C. Norte	23.3650	P-4747-A
86	ALFREDO RUBIO	Batobalani, Paracale, C. Norte	15.8639	T-13962
87	AUGUSTO UBAÑA	Batobalani, Paracale, C Norte	10.1589	T-6048

are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. Under DAR Administrative Order No. 1, Series of 2003, the right to choose the area to be retained must be exercised within Sixty (60) days from the date of Publication of the Notice of Coverage. Failure to exercise this right of retention, protest and application for exemption within the prescribed period shall be considered as a waiver of the right/privilege to: apply for exemption/exclusion or retention, nominate children as beneficiaries or submit evidence for determining just compensation.

Under Executive Order No. 405, we shall request the Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the reasonable Land Value of the said property being acquired pursuant to Section 17, of Republic Act No. 6657.

February 2, 2007
Date

(Sgd.) Atty. MIGUEL S. GRACILLA
OIC-PARO II

(PDI–February 15, 2007)

Pirated CDs seized in San Juan mall

By Nini Valera

ABOUT 8,000 PIRATED COMPACT discs were seized in a mall owned by an actor during a raid conducted by the Optical Media Board earlier this month.

The raid on One Greenhills Shopping Plaza on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan, owned by actor Cogie Domingo, was confirmed by OMB Chair Edu Manzano who told the INQUIRER that the estimated cost of the seized goods was around P640,000. Domingo was unavailable for comment.

The OMB raid took place on Feb. 3, a few days after the mall opened in January.

Manzano told the INQUIRER yesterday that about 80 percent of the pirated CDs found in the mall were Filipino movies. He expressed dismay over the fact that an active member of the local film industry was allowing the sale of pirated CDs in his establishment.

But lawyer Teresa Leonardo, who represents One Greenhills Shopping Plaza, denied that a raid took place.

In a text message she sent to INQUIRER Tuesday, Leonardo said that "One Greenhills maintains its stand that no raid was conducted in the mall. We do not allow the sale of any illegal items or merchandise."

Manzano, however, gave the INQUIRER documents and pictures pertaining to the raid, including a notice served on the mall owner or administration stating that the OMB found some tenants and occupants to be openly selling counterfeit optical media products. The notice also ordered the mall owner or administrator of the building to "take steps in preventing the deliberate and flagrant commission of the illegal sale, vending, and/or otherwise distribution of counterfeit optical media products."

Manzano said appropriate charges would be filed against the owner of the establishment.

Since January, the OMB has conducted various raids in Metro Manila and provincial cities. At the Bureau of Customs, P150 million worth of replicating equipment in container vans were intercepted by the OMB and Customs officials, Manzano said.

In Caloocan City, pirated discs estimated at P6 to P8 million were also found in two warehouses, he added.

Comedian loses SUV to car hijackers in QC

By Miko L. Morelos

THIEVES TOOK AT GUNPOINT THE vehicle of stand-up comedian Anton Diva in Quezon City after midnight yesterday.

Diva, Anthony Ragaza in real life, said the suspects also took with them his friend, Eleurefe Cariño Jr., his driver and companion of four years.

Cariño, however, was dropped off by the suspects in Marilao, Bulacan. He was unhurt but the suspects fled with Ragaza's 2005 Honda CRV with license plate ZBG 324.

Ragaza said he received a text message at around 1 a.m. yesterday from Cariño while he was working in a comedy bar on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

"He [Cariño] waits for me in the car because my work usually ends at about 3 a.m.," the stand-up comedian said. "He either takes a nap in the car or eats at a nearby fastfood restaurant."

That night, Cariño asked him for permission to go to a fastfood outlet nearby. He would be bringing the car, he added.

Cariño, meanwhile, said that as soon as he got down from the vehicle in front of the fastfood restaurant, a man approached him, and pointed a gun to his head.

"The man threatened to kill me if I didn't hand over the keys of the car," he said. "I told him that I would hand over the keys if they didn't hurt me."

After the suspect took the keys, three more men came out and boarded the vehicle, forcing Cariño into the back seat.

After driving around for some time, the suspects dropped him off in an area where a tricycle driver came to his aid.

JDV, victim of backstabbing?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

BACKSTABBING HAS STARTED EARLY, showing the ugly side of politics.

My sources in Pangasinan say the boys of President Macapagal-Arroyo are secretly supporting the candidacy of Benjie Lim, Speaker Joe de Venecia's No. 1 rival.

De Venecia was one of GMA's loyal supporters during her darkest hours when many of her allies were asking her to resign in the midst of the "Hello Garci" scandal.

They say that the word "gratitude" is not found in a politician's vocabulary.

* * *

In yesterday's Valentine's Day presentation in The Across the Nation section of the INQUIRER, a touching love story was featured: that of the late President Diosdado Macapagal and his first wife, Purita de la Rosa.

Purita, sister of the late Sen. Rogelio de la Rosa and actor Jaime de la Rosa, was described in that article as "sweet, kind and pretty."

Had Purita been our President's mother, she probably would have all those qualities, too. Just joking.

* * *

When deposed President Erap described some judges and justices as "hoodlums in robes," he couldn't have been more accurate.

At least three divisions at the Court of Appeals allegedly have corrupt members, according to very reliable inside sources.

There are 23 divisions at the appellate court, three justices composing a division. What do those "tainted" divisions do? They allegedly sell cases to the highest bidders, meaning litigants who can outpay their opponents in a lawsuit.

In fact, according to my sources, the three divisions—which have reportedly banded themselves into a syndicate—have a "bidding committee."

For the raffling of a case, these sources say, rich litigants, who know about the divisions' hanky-panky, are charged P500,000 as down payment.

When a litigant comes across with the "right amount," his decision comes out in 30 minutes.

You'll be surprised who acts as middleman between these allegedly corrupt appellate court divisions and rich Chinese litigants: He's a young lawyer and son of a famous retired justice.

* * *

By the way, the playboy justice who was featured in this column recently also counts as one of his conquests a well-known broadcast journalist.

The playboy justice allegedly calls litigants himself and directly deals with them. His fellow division members call him "*suwapang*" (greedy).

The playboy justice is not a member of the corrupt divisions mentioned above.

* * *

My gad, I'm appalled at the shameless bribe-taking of some of those Court of Appeals justices when they've been dragging their feet in reviewing the case of a complete paralytic who was wrongly convicted by a Bulacan lower court of rape!

I'm taking up the cudgels for Jeff Quesada, who's paralyzed from his toes up to his fingers. He can't even go to the toilet without being carried by two persons.

The poor guy is languishing at the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa.

But now I know why Jeff continues to stay in prison: He's poor.

* * *

Why doesn't Director General Oscar Calderon, Philippine National Police chief, investigate his subordinate who allegedly receives oodles and oodles of cash from "jueteng" lords?

This subordinate's alleged collector is a Manila police sergeant. The subordinate's reported total daily take: P200,000!

METROBRIEFS

Tragic love day

VALENTINE'S Day turned tragic for a couple who figured in a road accident in Cainta, Rizal early yesterday. Police said 41-year-old Virginia Quitevis was injured but her 52-year-old husband, Roney, was killed. The couple were on board their Toyota Tamaraw FX on Imelda Avenue at 12:55 a.m., when it was hit by a Toyota Corona driven by 20-year-old Irvine Eugene Viray. Because of the impact, the Tamaraw FX was hurled several meters away. The victims were brought to the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center where Roney died while undergoing treatment, police said.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Male-dominated

FILIPINO male drug users still outnumber their female counterparts by a long shot—for every 10 males who use illegal drugs, there is one female drug user. The report from the Southern Police District (SPD) also revealed that methylenedioxy methamphetamine or Ecstasy is now the third most popular drug, next to shabu and marijuana. The study, which looked into emerging trends in drug trafficking, said that 13 kinds of Ecstasy tablets are now sold in Metro Manila, according to drug peddlers who were questioned by the police.

Julie M. Aurelio.

PWU's 88th year

THE PHILIPPINE Women's University marked its 88th founding anniversary with a student Recognition Day and Foundation Day Convocation in ceremonies held yesterday and continues today at the Conrado Benitez Hall, Manila-Taft campus. Chancellor Dr. Dolores Lasan opened the program with a short talk, followed by the presentation of service awardees by Dr. Eden Kelemen, Dr. Dina Dayon, Arch. Encarnacion Rarallo and Noel Benitez.

It's a three-cornered fight for Nicole Smith's body

HOLLYWOOD—TWO MEN claiming to be the father of Anna Nicole Smith's baby are now battling over the late model's body.

Photographer Larry Birkhead petitioned a court Tuesday asking that the model's remains be preserved for DNA paternity testing, while a medical examiner warned that her body is decomposing and should be released.

The petition made in Broward County Circuit Court requests that a California court order for DNA testing that was filed Friday, the day after Smith died, be enforced in Florida.

An attorney for Smith said DNA had already been taken.

Tuesday's request was made so that work done to secure the Los Angeles court order "not be in vain," Birkhead's attorney, Debra Opri said.

A Los Angeles judge last week requested that Florida authorities keep Smith's body for 10 days. That court earlier ordered DNA testing, which Smith's companion Howard K. Stern and Smith's mother, Vergie Arthur, were opposing.

A court hearing was planned for Wednesday morning, she said.

Meanwhile, Broward County medical examiner Joshua Perper issued an affidavit urging the prompt release of Smith's body, warning that "any further delay would result in destructive changes to the body." Smith died Thursday after collapsing at a hotel.

Perper said attorneys representing Stern and her mother notified him that they plan to request an emergency order for a prompt release of the body.

Stern, who says he is the father of 5-month-old Dannielynn, and Smith's mother fear that if the body is not embalmed, even though it is refrigerated, it will not be suitable for viewing or funeral purposes, Perper said.

Perper said the model's body will remain refrigerated until he receives a judge's order.

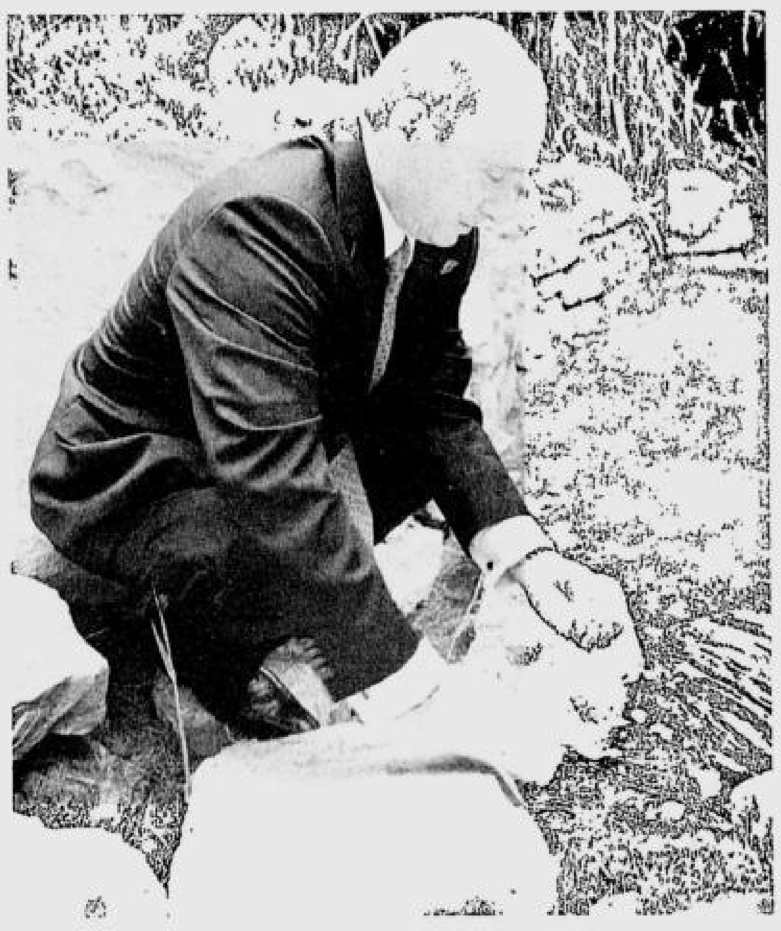
Telephone messages left at the offices and on the cell phone of James T. Neavitt, Stern's attorney, were not immediately returned. Telephone messages could not be left on Stern's cell phone.

Ron Rale, the attorney who had represented Smith in the Los Angeles court battle over paternity, said late Tuesday that he planned to go to the Los Angeles court Wednesday morning to ask that the hold on the body be reduced on grounds that the coroner had already extracted DNA.

"Her DNA is never going to show paternity for the baby," Rale said.

Along with the paternity case, Rale is the executor of Smith's estate. He and Stern, also a coexecutor, are authorized to make funeral arrangements. Rale, however, told The Associated Press Television News that Smith's mother was fighting to bring her body to Texas for burial. *AP*

SMITH AP



RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin visits the place where Jesus Christ was alledgedly baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan River in Amman, Feb. 13. AFP

Washington using Russia as 'threat' to get funding–Putin

AMMAN—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin accused the United States of using Russia as a "threat" to secure funds from Congress for its military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan and for its antimissile program in Europe.

"For more than 10 years we have been listening to what our partners have been saying about different topics. We are very patient and very tolerant but we have the feeling that we are misunderstood," Putin told reporters in Amman.

"They have begun to stir up so-called threats created by Russia, which don't exist, in order to ask the US Congress for funds for their military action in Afghanistan, Iraq, and to build their antimissile shield in Europe," he added.

"These are not our problems. They are not linked to Russia," Putin said, after separate talks in Amman with Jordan's King Abdullah II and Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas.

Putin was responding to questions over the debate provoked by the blistering attack he made against US policies last week at a security conference in Munich.

The Russian leader said on Saturday that Washington had disastrously "overstepped" its borders, "imposed itself on other states" and that US dominance was "ruinous."

In Amman, he said: "Everthing I said in Munich, I said openly and frankly to our American partners." "There is nothing unusual for them in what I have said. I am certain of everything I said. All that was the truth."

Last week US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Russia is among countries that pose a potential military threat, prompting Moscow to demand an explanation.

"We asked, via the US ambassador in Moscow, for a clarification of the official position of the US administration regarding Robert Gates' comments," Russian foreign ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin said Monday.

Kamynin said there had recently been a series of statements by US military and intelligence officials that caused Russia "perplexity." On Feb. 7, Gates told a Congress that the United States has to boost its military machine to face all threats, not just the war in Iraq.

"We need the full range of military capabilities. We need ... the ability for regular force-on-force conflicts, because we don't know what's going to develop in places like Russia and China, in North Korea, in Iran and elsewhere," Gates said.

Putin's recent remarks about the United States are the latest in a long line of criticisms of Washington's foreign policy.

Last May, in his annual state of the nation message, he said Russia faces a growing arms race against a "fortress" United States which cares more about its own interests than democracy or human rights.

And in late 2004, he used a visit to India to launch a salvo at the United States. Without directly naming it, he accused Washington of running a "dictatorship ... beautifully gift-wrapped in pseudo-democratic phraseology" to the detriment of most of the rest of the planet. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Explosion kills 18 in Iran

TEHRAN—A car loaded with explosives blew up near a bus carrying members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards in southeastern Iran, killing 18 of them, the state-run news agency reported Wednesday. The car stopped in front of the bus near Zahedan, the capital of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported. It called the attack a terrorist operation and said the car's occupants fled on motorbikes seconds before the car exploded. "This blind terrorist operation led to the martyrdom of 18 citizens of Zahedan," IRNA quoted a Guards commander, Qasem Rezaei, as saying. State-run television said the bus had been taking them to work when the attack took place. *AP*

NATO forces kill 22 Taliban

KANDAHAR—NATO and Afghan forces killed 22 Taliban rebels in southern Afghanistan during battles near a besieged dam and a remote town that was captured by the militants, officials said Tuesday. Up to 15 militants were killed on Monday when British troops backed by helicopters and Afghan forces tried to clear rebel strongholds around the hydroelectric dam in Kajaki district of Helmand province, police said. The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said it called in close air support against militants in the same area again Tuesday in a "successful precision air strike." It did not say how many rebels were killed. *AFP*

Curfew relaxed in Guinea

CONAKRY—Guinea's army chief said Tuesday the curfew that has sparked worldwide condemnation after the deaths of four protesters would be relaxed to allow state employees and aid agencies to return work, according to state media sources. Four people defying the imposition of a 20-hour curfew were killed by security forces on Tuesday, becoming the first casualties under martial law declared the day before, witnesses told AFP.

Following the deaths Army Chief of Staff General Kerfalla Camara announced a slight relaxation of the curfew from 20 to 18 hours per day. AFP

US to cancel Liberia's debt

WASHINGTON—The United States boosted the fledgling recovery of Liberia by announcing Tuesday it was erasing the war-ravaged West African nation's debt. Speaking at the start of a two-day conference of Liberia's donors here, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted the United States holds $391 million in outstanding bilateral loans to Liberia. "We will cancel that debt, all of it," she said. "We hope that this will help to relieve Liberia's crippling debt burden, a debt burden that today's leadership and today's people of Liberia do not deserve," Rice said. Liberia labors under $3.7 billion in debt run up by former warlord leaders such as Charles Taylor, who is now on trial at The Hague for alleged war crimes. *AFP*

Lebanon marks Hariri slay

BEIRUT—Waving flags, holding balloons and even praying, tens of thousands of Lebanese packed into a city square Wednesday to mark the second anniversary of Rafik Hariri's assassination. The government deployed hundreds of troops to deter trouble, a day after two bombs killed three people. Troops in full combat gear and armored cars deployed in and around Martyrs' Square, where the country's two main rival groups were present: government supporters commemorating the death of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and opposition supporters continuing their daily sit-in to demand the government's resignation. The soldiers set up a razor wire barrier to separate the two groups. *AP*

DENG XIAOPING

The man who awakened the Chinese giant

BEIJING—THOUGH HE DIED 10 YEARS ago, former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping is still revered, albeit quietly, as the man who truly awakened the sleeping giant that was China.

The ultimate political survivor, Deng rode a roller coaster of revolutionary glory, purges and repeated comebacks in a seven-decade career to outlast most contemporaries and implement the far-reaching changes that sparked China's current reemergence on the world stage.

Born in 1904 to a well-off peasant family in southwestern China's Sichuan province, Deng was a child of the turbulent days when the Chinese revolution overthrew the Manchu empire, and he developed an early interest in politics.

After graduating from preparatory school in 1920, Deng boarded a river boat in his rural hometown at 16, bound for study in France.

While there, he encountered the Marxist ideas then spreading across Europe following the Russian revolution and in 1924 joined the Chinese Communist Party in Paris.

Returning to China in 1926, he occupied various top Red Army and party posts as the Communists battled the Chinese Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek.

He eventually participated in the 1934-35 Long March, the gruelling Mao Zedong-led tactical retreat through China's countryside that forged many party leaders.

After the Communist victory in 1949, he oversaw his native southwest China before relocating to 1952 to Beijing, where he moved up the party ranks, eventually becoming general secretary of the Communist Party in 1956.

Showing an early inclination against political openness, he supported Mao's 1957 purge of intellectuals known as the "Anti-Rightist Campaign". However, he was eventually purged himself as a "rightist" during Mao's 1966-76 Cultural Revolution for advocating relatively free market policies and he was sent to work as a lowly labourer in the countryside.

In the madness of the times, even his family was targeted, with son Deng Pufang falling — or, according to some versions of the story, pushed — from a fourth-floor window and becoming a paraplegic amid persecution by Mao's supporters.

Deng was eventually reinstated and named vice premier in 1974 but his continued calls for rational economic policies caused his dismissal once again at the instigation of the "Gang of Four" led by Mao's wife Jiang Qing. *AFP*

Argentina seeks extradition of Isabel Peron

BUENOS AIRES—ARGENTINA ON TUESDAY formally asked Spain to extradite former president Isabel Peron in connection with crimes allegedly committed by a right-wing death squad during her 1974-1976 rule, a foreign ministry official said.

"The extradition request was sent today by the foreign ministry," the official said.

The 75-year-old Peron, who has lived in Spain since 1980, is wanted in Argentina in relation to investigations into the paramilitary Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (AAA,) which is accused of conducting some 1,500 killings in the 1970s.

She is also sought in the kidnapping and disappearance of activist Hector Fagetti Gallego, who was arrested one month before the March 1976 military coup that ousted her from power.

Argentine judge Norberto Oyarbide, who leads the AAA case, said the crimes committed by the far right-wing group were the result of "an institutionally implemented terrorist policy."

Hector Acosta, the judge in the kidnapping case against Peron, said the former president was responsible for decrees signed during her government that ordered "the eradication of actions by subversive elements."

Peron, the third wife of the late Argentine president Juan Peron, has been under house arrest in Spain since Jan. 12 after Argentina issued an international warrant.

Peron, who has refused extradition, has been leading a semi-reclusive life in Spain, splitting her time between her house near Madrid and a home in the southern seaside resort of Marbella, a favorite jet-set haunt, according to local media.

But the woman who succeeded "Evita" Peron as Argentina's first lady and later her husband as president, is in frail health, Spain's El Pais daily reported. *AFP*

RARE BREED

Two hairless Mexican Xoloitzcuintle dogs rest after a walk at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City. Emotionally fragile, with delicate skin that burns easily and poor teeth that mean they prefer chewing carrots to bones, Xoloitzcuintles had nearly died out by the 1950s, when just a hundred or so were kept by Mexican artists and intellectuals. But a breeding program has boosted their numbers to several thousand today. REUTERS

Thaksin can return after polls, says Thai PM

BANGKOK—OUSTED PRIME Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has the right to return to his country but should wait until a new government is elected, his successor Surayud Chulanont said Tuesday.

Speaking in a live interview on Thai TV Channel 9, Surayud described Thaksin's administration as one that suffered from "serious problems of power abuse and good governance."

Thailand is "in a transition period and if he wants to come back, he should wait until the constitution is finished, elections are held and the elected government installed," said Surayud, who was appointed interim prime minister after the coup that ousted Thaksin in September.

Thaksin was then in New York, and has since spent most of his time in London and traveling around Asia.

Surayud is expected to remain in power until new polls can be held later this year.

The prime minister also said his predecessor may only return if he ends his political activities, and he warned that the military council behind the current government might not allow him back into the country.

The current government not only wants him to end his involvement in party politics, but also wants him to end any activities that could influence the political climate.

Some members of Surayud's government think Thaksin's presence could destabilize Thailand. They have suggested that recent interviews he gave overseas, defending his record and criticizing the coup, have a similar effect.

Surayud said Thaksin can't be trusted to tell the truth.

"We have to consider if what he says is consistent with what he does. If it is, that's fine, but we have seen cases of him saying one thing and doing the opposite," he said. "People can use their judgment to decide what is true and what (Thaksin) has left out."

Surayud's administration is increasingly regarded as directionless and lacking in accomplishment, especially in the economic sphere. He defended it by contrasting it with Thaksin's, which was accused of corruption and cronyism.

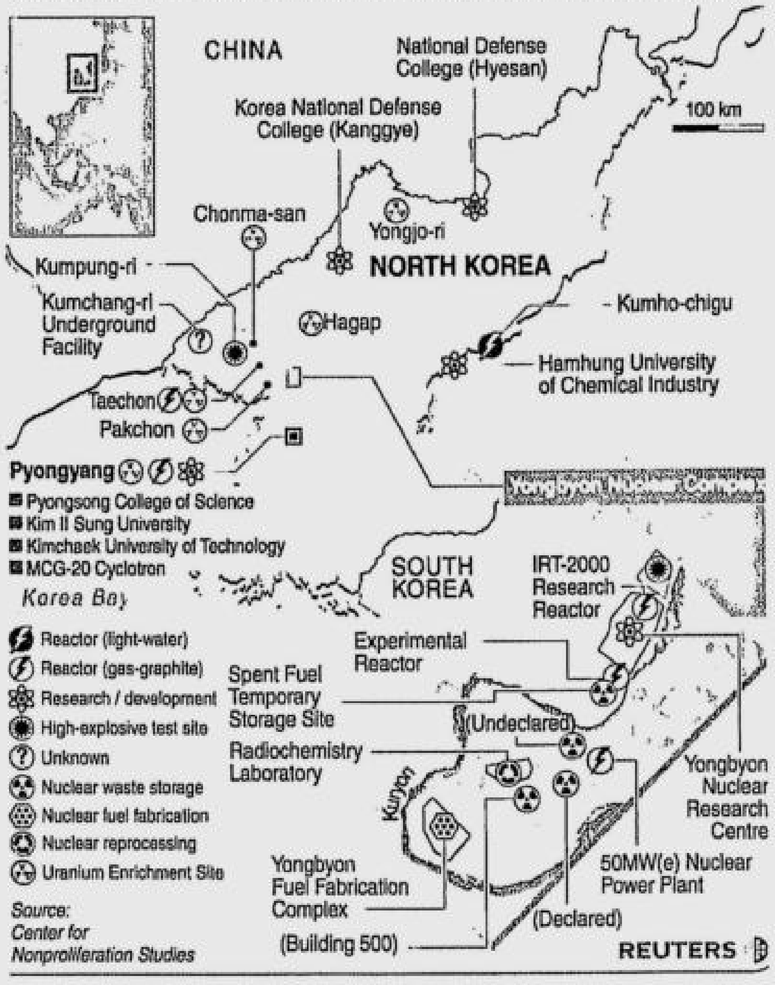
"I accept all criticism about our performance but we can assure the people that this government is transparent," he said. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR FACILITIES

North Korea will shut down the Yongbyon reactor complex at the heart of its nuclear programme and allow international inspectors onto the site as part of an initial disarmament deal sealed in Beijing on Tuesday



Source: Center for Nonproliferation Studies

REUTERS

N. Korea agrees to shut down key nuke facilities

BEIJING—NORTH KOREA AGREED TUESDAY to shut down key nuclear facilities in exchange for badly needed fuel, but later appeared to backtrack, with official media saying the deal only required the "temporary suspension" of its nuclear sites.

The fuel deal is part of a broad agreement aimed at ending the regime's controversial nuclear program.

In return, the United States would hold direct talks on diplomatic relations with North Korea—a member of US President George W. Bush's "axis of evil—and begin looking at removing it from the US list of terrorist nations.

The deal came after nearly a week of gruelling six-nation talks in Beijing aimed at convincing the secretive Stalinist state, which tested an atomic bomb for the first time in October, to abandon its nuclear weapons.

But reacting to the agreement, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) referred only to the "temporary suspension of the operation of its nuclear facilities." The text of the deal makes no reference to a temporary suspension.

Chinese negotiator Wu Dawei said an "important consensus" had been reached at the talks, which would resume in Beijing on March 19 to verify that the deal is being properly implemented.

"It marks an important and solid step for the six-party talks and a nuclear-free Korean peninsula," Wu told reporters. "This progress has made the talks a success."

Under the deal, North Korea would have 60 days to shut down its main Yongbyon nuclear reactor and allow United Nations nuclear inspectors back into the country.

Meanwhile, the energy-starved regime would receive a first tranche of 50,000 tons of fuel oil—part of an eventual one million tons if the accord progresses as spelt out and the North permanently disables its key nuclear facilities.

Chief US envoy Christopher Hill said he was pleased with the outcome but warned there was still a long way to go before the end goal of a denuclearized North Korea was achieved.

"This is only the end of the beginning of the process. We have a lot of work to do," he told reporters.

Previously, North Korea agreed at six-way talks in September 2005 to scrap its atomic plans but then boycotted the negotiations for over a year, and still earlier agreements foundered on disputes between Washington and Pyongyang.

South Korea, the United States, China, Russia and Japan have been holding nearly four years of on-again, off-again talks with the North, one of the poorest and most isolated nations in the world.

In 2002, President Bush lumped North Korea in with Iran and prewar Iraq as an "axis of evil" linked to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—while the North has repeatedly condemned Washington's "hostile policy." But with the new deal, the two countries will "start bilateral talks aimed at resolving pending bilateral issues and moving toward full diplomatic relations," the joint statement said.

Removing the North from the US list of terrorist sponsors could also clear the way for US firms to do business with North Korea. *AFP*

Iraq closes borders with Iran, Syria

BAGHDAD—IRAQ ANNOUNCED Tuesday it will close its borders with Iran and Syria and impose draconian emergency-style security measures on Baghdad after two days of bombings left around 100 dead.

The commander charged with overseeing the Baghdad security plan, Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, announced details of the measures in a decree read out on state television as night fell after another day of carnage.

Wearing a military uniform and a red beret, the mustachioed general said the measures would come into effect at a date "to be announced later." "All those who breach the terms of this decree will be judged under the law on terrorism by the high criminal court which will hold special trial sessions for this purpose," he warned.

Four of the main Iranian and two Syrian border posts will remain closed for 72 hours, before reopening, but others will be shut indefinitely, he said.

In addition, weapons permits will be suspended for everyone in Baghdad apart from the Iraqi and US-led security forces and registered private security firms and the city's nightly curfew will be reinforced.

Gambar will combine under his command police and military forces, and be empowered to crack down on rogue security force units within the capital.

The decree will authorize him to "impose necessary restrictions in all public places and centers and clubs and organizations and unions and businesses and institutions and offices to protect citizens and people who work.

"Searches will be done on public streets and precautionary measures will be applied on packages, mail, messages and communications and telecommunications equipment," he said, reading the decree on state television.

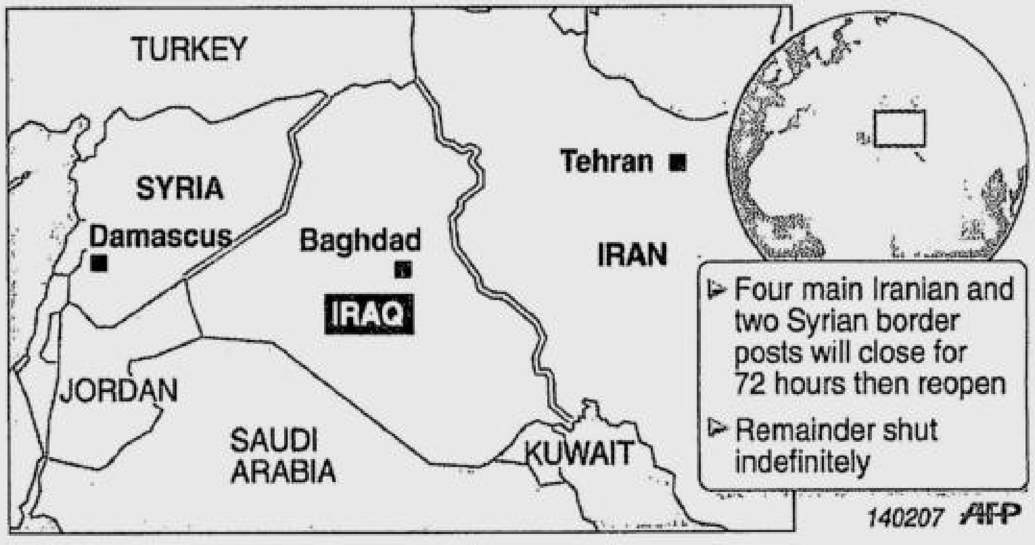
"Security forces will be authorized to block or search public or private property ... (and) will have the right to impose travel restrictions on individuals or vehicles," he added.

Iraqis living in housing belonging to displaced persons will be given two weeks to leave or face eviction, he warned.

Gambar has been put in charge of a plan that will involve dividing Baghdad into 10 districts patrolled by US troops and forces from Iraq's defense and interior ministries. *AFP*

Troubled borders

Iraq border with Iran, Syria to close under new security plan



- Four main Iranian and two Syrian border posts will close for 72 hours then reopen
- Remainder shut indefinitely

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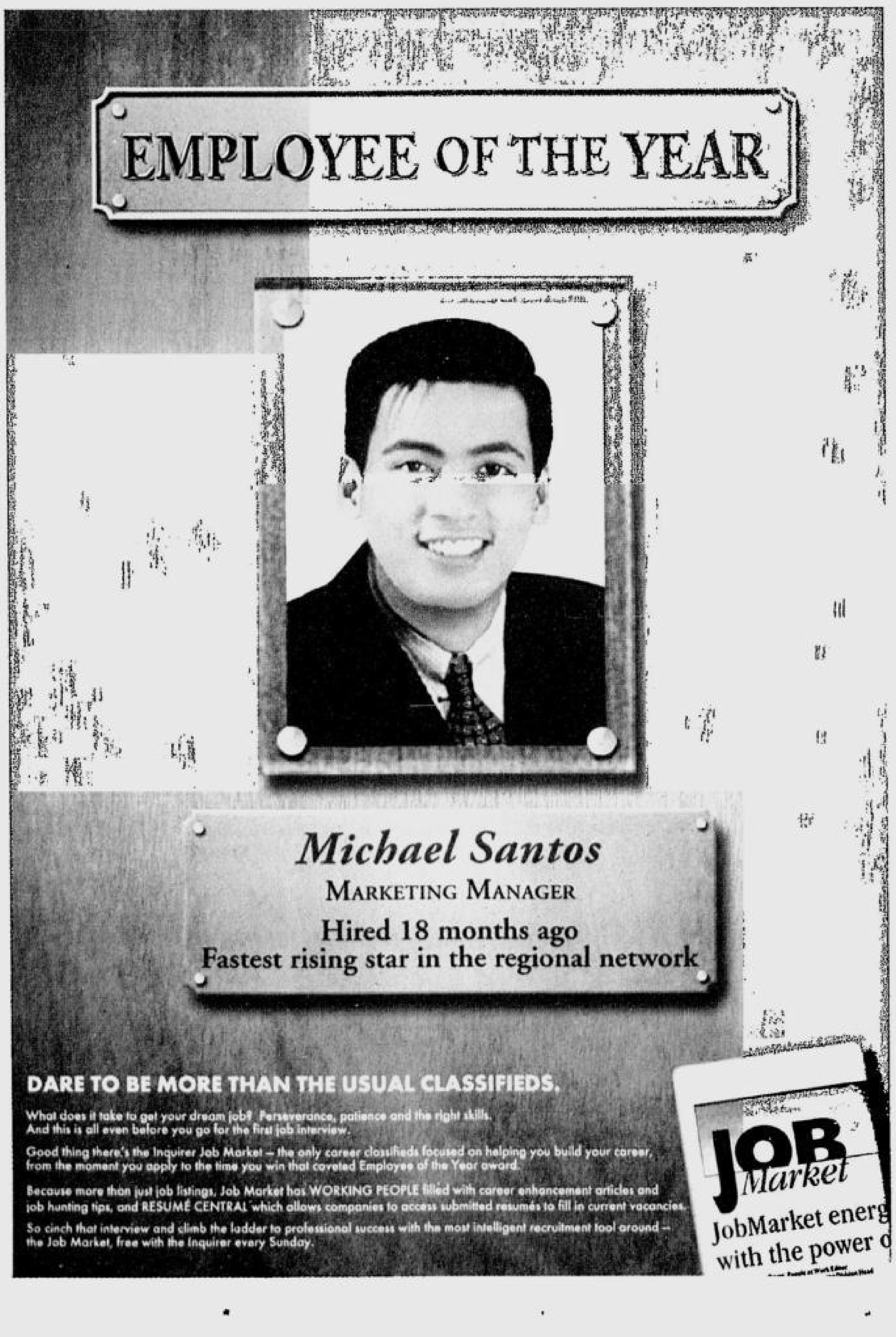

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US lawmakers square off over Iraq war strategy

WASHINGTON—US LAWmakers squared off on Tuesday over President George W. Bush's troop buildup in Iraq, with Democrats declaring Americans had lost faith in the war and Republicans warning against undermining the US struggle with terrorism.

Democrats in the House of Representatives began three days of debate on a two-sentence resolution opposing Bush's decision to send 21,500 more combat troops to Iraq. The measure would not force the president to change course, but would be the first time lawmakers have challenged him directly on the war.

"The American people have lost faith in the president's course in Iraq, and they are demanding a new direction," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, said as she opened the debate.

Pelosi said the vote would show whether lawmakers had heard the message voters sent in November elections that current policies on the war "have not worked, will not work, and must be changed." The elections propelled Democrats to the majority in both the Senate and House.

In the sometimes emotional debate, in which both sides sought to show off their military veterans, Republican leaders argued that far more than Iraq was at stake if the United States brought its troops home right away.

Minority Leader John Boehner of Ohio warned that to leave Iraq now would be to give free rein to Iran in the region and leave Israel particularly vulnerable. Iraq, he said, was only part of a global fight against "radical Islamic terrorists." Boehner wiped tears from his face with a handkerchief at a press conference when Republican Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas told of being a prisoner of war in Vietnam and hearing his captors blare over loudspeakers the news of antiwar sentiment back in the United States.

Democrats, meanwhile, gave reporters a copy of a Republican letter in which they urged fellow Republicans to focus their debate on the "global threat of the radical Islamist movement" instead of trying to defend the current situation in Iraq.

The measure, which has sponsors in both parties, is expected to pass in a vote on Friday with the support of most Democrats, as well as some Republicans who have growing doubts about the nearly 4-year-old war, which has taken more than 3,100 American lives.

The proposal could then move to the Senate.

The new USA Today/Gallup Poll said Americans overwhelmingly support congressional action to cap the number of US troops in Iraq and bring them home by the end of next year.

House Democrats pledged to take further action on Iraq.

They are expected to try to put restrictions on $100 billion in additional funds Bush has requested for the war—requiring, for example, that soldiers go to Iraq only after being certified as fully trained and equipped. *Reuters*

Palestinian PM to resign to form gov't

GAZA—PALESTINIAN PRIME Minister Ismail Haniyeh and his Hamas-led cabinet will resign in the next two days to make way for a unity government with the rival Fatah faction, a government official said on Tuesday.

Haniyeh is expected to lead the new government, according to the terms of a deal agreed between Hamas and Fatah in Saudi Arabia last week which aimed to end factional warfare in Gaza and ease an economic embargo on the Palestinian Authority.

"The prime minister will submit his cabinet's resignation within two days so that he can begin constitutional measures to form the unity government," the official, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

In Jordan, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told Russian President Vladimir Putin the step would take place in the next two or three days "if there are no unpleasant surprises." Putin, speaking on the last leg of a Middle East tour, was heard telling Abbas at Amman airport that he hoped economic sanctions Western donors imposed on the Palestinian Authority after Hamas came to power last year would be lifted soon.

Haniyeh earlier said it was too soon to say when he will resign. Officials said he and Fatah's Abbas still had to finalize issues from the Saudi-brokered deal including naming an interior minister and deputy prime minister.

Haniyeh met leaders of 13 Palestinian factions on Tuesday, seeking to win support for the power-sharing deal with Abbas.

"Constitutional measures will begin to implement the agreement on the ground," said Palestinian cabinet spokesperson Ghazi Hamad after the meeting.

"There are consultations between President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. We are working speedily and we do not want to waste any time," he said. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Agojo keeps hot form /A24

SPORTS

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Wade generates Heat /A26

Harbour Centre guns for 2-0 cushion today

HAPEE-PCU'S Ronald Bucao (left) and teammate Philip Butel (center) try to regain possession of a loose ball against Harbour Centre's Richard Alonzo in Game 1 last Tuesday. RYAN LIM

HAVING FINALLY SURVIVED A series opener, Harbour Centre will be bristling with confidence when it shoots for a 2-0 lead against Hapee-PCU today in the 2007 PBL Silver Cup championship playoffs.

The Port Masters seized Game 1 of the best-of-five series, 84-80, after going through some anxious moments and coach Jorge Gallent believes that everything now augurs well for his boys.

"Our championship experience greatly helped us turn the tide," said Gallent, adding that Harbour will be going into the 3 p.m. game at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym even more inspired.

Harbour Centre, which is gunning for a second straight title, will actually be going for a fourth straight win, the first two of the streak coming at the expense of Toyota Otis in their semifinal series.

For Hapee coach Jun Noel, it will all boil down to execution and the efficiency of the team to carry its task on both ends of the floor.

"Our poor foul shooting led to our defeat. We missed so many opportunities in the final quarter," said Noel, who cited the team's inexperience as a secondary concern.

"We have to shoot well in the free throw area and make some adjustments on defense," he added.

Adjustment will also be the top concern of Teeth Master Jason Castro, the league's leading MVP contender. Castro was hounded by Ryan Araña throughout and was held to just eight points on 2 of 12 shooting.

With Araña all over him, Castro went scoreless in the first and third quarters.

"They play a highly physical game and we have to match their energy level and intensity," said Hapee team manager Bernard Yang.

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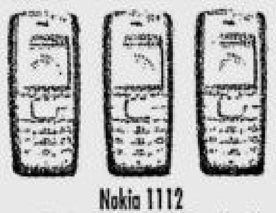

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Agojo keeps hot form, boosts Pepperdine U lady golfers

JAYVIE: Red-hot

PALOS VERDES, CALIFORNIA—Jayvie Agojo isn't letting up.

The sophomore Pepperdine stalwart shot a 2-over 73 on Tuesday to stay at an even 142 after two rounds and lead the individual contest of the Northrop Grumman Regional Challenge at the Palos Verdes Golf Club.

Agojo, the former standout of the Philippine ladies golf team, was four shots ahead of Texas A&M's Christa Spedding and Arizona's Adriana Zwanck. Both players stood at 4-over par 146 after two rounds.

Agojo's solid performance kept the ninth-ranked Pepperdine women's golf team well entrenched at the top spot of the team competition, after a 13-over 297 on Tuesday gave it a 36-hole total of 26-over 594.

The Pepperdine Waves thus take a four-shot lead over Arizona State in the final round on Wednesday. Florida is at third place with a 603 aggregate thus far while at fourth chasing the leaders is USC with a 606.

Texas A&M and Arizona are two shots further back in the team competition of the 54-hole event that includes 14 teams ranked in the top 30 of the Golfweek poll.

Agojo stormed to the lead after a two-under 69 in Monday's first round, earning her the role as the spearhead of the Waves.

The other Pepperdine stars in this five-to-count, four-to-play event include freshman Misun Cho, who posted a 2-over par 73 on Tuesday and is in a group of five players tied for 10th at 7-over par 149.

Senior All-American Eileen Vargas (150) is tied for 15th while junior Stephanie Gelleni (153) is tied for 25th and junior Leanne Bowditch (157) is tied for 40th.

DepEd uncovers cheaters

Charges recommended vs school supervisor, principal

By Cedelf Tupas

BACOLOD CITY—THEY NEVER LEARN.

The Department of Education in Negros Occidental is recommending the filing of administrative charges against a school supervisor, a principal and a teacher in Hinigaran town for their alleged involvement in the fielding of an ineligible player in the 2006 Provincial Palaro.

Eva Belicena, the Negros Occidental schools division superintendent, yesterday said they have found Fifth District district supervisor Corazon Mohametano, along with Pahilanga Elementary School principal Nenita Caballero and PES teacher Julio Ferreros, liable for the age-cheating incident in the elementary boys' volleyball competitions.

Belicena said the three violated Palaro rules and regulations and committed actions prejudicial to the best interest of the service, which is considered a grave offense under the DepEd.

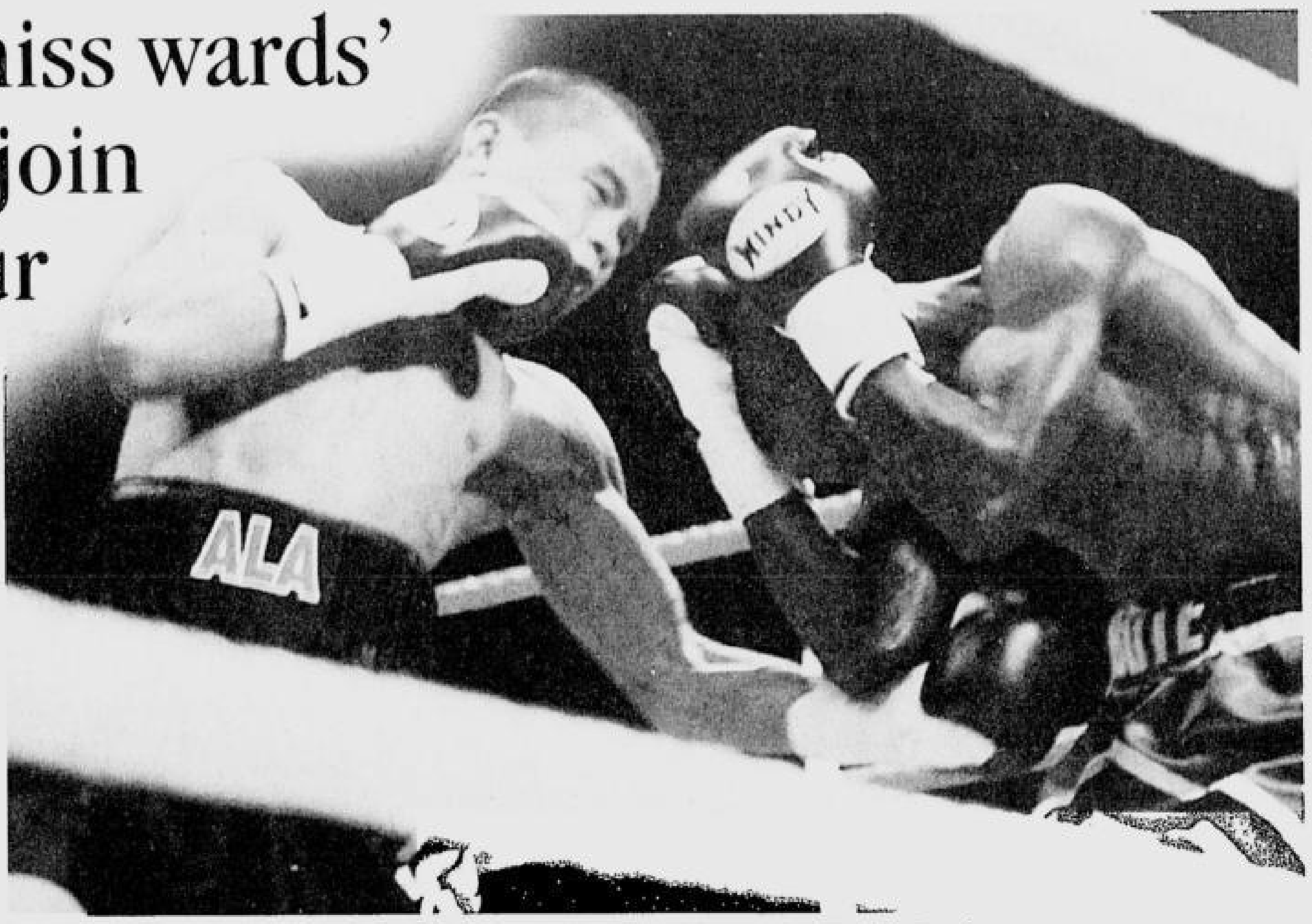
The findings of the case and the recommendations made by a provincial DepEd committee assigned to probe the incident will be forwarded to Victoriano Tirol, director of the Western Visayas DepEd, who will decide on the sanctions to be imposed on Mohametano, Caballero and Ferreros.

Belicina said the player's age in his Palaro entry form and his school records were "inconsistent". The birthdate listed in the registration form of the over-aged player indicated that he was only a month older than his younger brother, Belicina said. "The player was nearly two years overage".

The incident is the second in less than a year involving Negros, after Narciso Jayme, then coach of the Negros Occidental secondary baseball team in the WVRAA Meet, was discovered to have fielded an over-aged player in the Regional Palaro held in Roxas City in March.

Jayme, a teacher at Dr. Antonio Lizares Memorial High School, was slapped a lifetime coaching ban by the Region VI Department of Education for his action.

Roach to miss wards' bouts, will join Oscar's tour



FOR HIS next match, Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista (left) will be without trainer Freddie Roach.

PDI PHOTO

RENOWNED TRAINER FREDDIE ROACH won't be at ringside when his prized fighters Z Gorres and Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista tackle tough foes on Feb. 24 in Cebu.

Manny Pacquiao's famous American trainer has begged off from coming to the Philippines to take part in the 11-city media tour organized by Golden Boy Promotions to drum up the May 5 showdown between Oscar De La Hoya and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Sportsman Antonio L. Aldeguer, who manages both Gorres and Bautista, said that Roach, who had agreed to train De La Hoya, had wanted to fly to Cebu to assist the two fighters, but apparently could not turn down the request to take part in the media blitz.

"He has already begged off. And we told him that we perfectly understand his situation," Aldeguer said.

Gorres will challenge World Boxing Organization super flyweight king Fernando Montiel in a 12-round bout headlining the "Moment of Truth" card at the Cebu City Sports Complex, while Bautista takes on Colombian Feider Viloria in the co-featured 12-rounder.

ALA Gym chief trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor will now work the corner of the Gorres and Bautista assisted by the other ALA trainers.

The official announcement—and the start of an 11-city media tour—for the highly anticipated De La Hoya-Mayweather bout will be made on Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City.

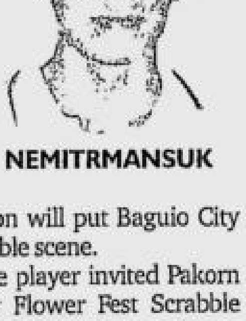
The fighters and their respective camps will then travel across the country, making stops in Philadelphia, Washington DC, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, Houston, Dallas, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Los Angeles to conduct public press conferences and invite fans to be a part of the experience of the most anticipated boxing event in decades.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Scrabble whiz arrives for Baguio tilt

SCRABBLE WHIZ PAKORN NEMITRMANSUK will be in the country to compete in the Baguio City Flower Fest Scrabble Tournament on Feb. 24 and 25 at the Baguio Country Club.

Pakorn, a 31-year-old architect from Thailand, is the favorite to win the upcoming World Scrabble Championship in November this year. He is twice runner-up in the WSC, a biennial event attended by top players from countries where English scrabble is played.



NEMITRMANSUK

Huub Luyk, president of the Baguio Benguet Scrabble Club, said he hopes that Pakorn's participation will put Baguio City in the international scrabble scene.

A top Filipino scrabble player invited Pakorn to join the Baguio City Flower Fest Scrabble Tournament, where the best Filipino players compete.

The Philippines competes in the WSC and other international competitions including the United States Scrabble Open, which has a first prize of $25,000 and the Thailand's King's Cup held annually in June with a $6,000 prize.

For info on Philippine scrabble, text or call 0916-3148384.

Trainer: 'Boom Boom in shape'

DANAO CITY—UNDEFEATED SUPER bantamweight Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista is set to wrap up his training here then move to the Marriott Hotel next week before he tangles with Colombian Feider Viloria on Feb. 24 at the Cebu City Sports Complex.

Bautista sparred for six rounds Tuesday against four different sparmates at the Ramon M. Durano Sr. Memorial Sports Complex.

The sports facility is just a kilometer away from the beachfront resthouse owned by sportsman Antonio L. Aldeguer, where Bautista is staying with trainer Edito Villamor.

"He is in fantastic shape. He's been keeping close watch of his diet and health," said Villamor in an interview yesterday after the late afternoon workout.

In tremendous shape, Bautista toyed with his sparmates Danny Boy Bontilao (two rounds), Fernando Otic (two rounds), Weng Haya (one round) and Reman Salim (one round).

The four sparmates are all heftier than Bautista.

Boom Boom also downplayed rumors that the undefeated fighter had been knocked down by Haya in a previous sparring session, saying that it was a slip.

"I wasn't knocked down. I was off-balanced," Bautista said in Cebuano. Villamor confirmed the freak fall.

Keeping a close watch during yesterday's sparring sessions was Aldeguer and a good number of fans made up of students.

Bautista will spar for four more rounds today and then winds up his sparring on Saturday with another four-round session.

Meanwhile, WBO super flyweight champion Fernando Montiel and WBC Latino super bantamweight titlist Feider Viloria will be presented by Sports Promotion president and international promoter Sammy Gello-ania at a press conference on Feb. 18 at noon at the Cebu City Marriott Hotel in Cebu Business Park.

Montiel, who will stake his title against Z Gorres, will be accompanied by trainer-manager Manuel Montiel while Viloria will be joined by trainer-coach Miguel Gonzales.

On the same day, Indonesia's WBO Asia Pacific super featherweight king Simson Butar-Butar will arrive from Jakarta with manager Jhonson Hutagaol and an unnamed trainer.

The team will stay at Rajah Park Hotel near the Fuente Osmeña Circle, which will host the Indons during their stay in Cebu City. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

GMA charity golf: Stallions beat Tigers

TEAM STALLIONS BEAT TEAM TIGERS, 7-3, and became the first squad to win as back-to-back champions in the GMA-7 Xavier Matchplay charity golf tournament at the Santa Elena Golf and Country Club in Sta. Rosa, Laguna last week.

Co-captained by Lawrence Cobankiat and Mike Chan, the well-balanced lineup of the Stallions topped the elimination and semifinal rounds before disposing off the Tigers in this event organized by Xavier School Batch '75 for the benefit of the Xavier School Education Trust Fund.

Unlike the Stallions, the Tigers barely made it to the finals when they went down, 0-5, in the first five matches before rallying to a 5-5 deadlock and won by countback over a relentless Team Dragons.

All-rookie Team XS90s, skippered by Baldwin Cheung, finished at third place over the Dragons.

Team Batch '72 captured fourth spot. Team CK and Team Colt 45 completed the final standings in the six-team competitions.

Solid unions in sporting world

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

SINCE IT IS VALENTINE'S week, I thought perhaps it would be appropriate to pay a small tribute to the marital unions in the sporting world that have endured the test of time and temptation.

This idea came to mind when I bumped into former Crispa Redmanizer Atoy Co and his youngest son—now all grown up—at the SM Megamall Adidas showroom recently.

Yes, it has been that long ago, said Atoy, his Beatles hair now turning salt and pepper. His oldest, the only girl, is now 26. None of his 4 kids, however, are married.

Atoy said he and his wife Monet have been married for 27 years now and while he has sown some wild oats during his bachelor days, he had taken the path of the straight and narrow ever since he took his wedding vows.

Atoy's formula for a lasting union is simple: "I give her everything she wants," he said.

***

There are many sporting couples that have stayed together in marital bliss for over three decades, their marriage remaining as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar to this day.

For me, the most ideal role models are International Chess Grandmaster Eugene Torre, whom I've known since he was a bachelor, and wife Marilyn, and Sonny and Evelyn Jaworski.

For Eugene the most important ingredient that has kept his marriage going is "genuine love."

"This is the foundation. Good communication helped us avoid quarrels while understanding and forgiving each other's weaknesses (while appreciating each other's strengths), and also supporting each other's joys and interests in life further helped boost our marriage," Eugene said.

***

In the case of the living legend, I didn't need to ask him what his secret was.

Married for as long as I can remember, I can still see the love oozing from the Big J's eyes every time he's with Evelyn.

This is another case of genuine, endless love, and no less than close friend Reli de Leon vouches for this.

"Sonny has enough love for the both of them, it is the kind of classical love you only read in books, see in romantic movies," Reli said. "As much as possible, they always take their meals together and when Sonny is out of town, his thought is always on Evelyn, wondering what he can buy her, what he can bring her home."

***

For the younger generation like Coke team manager Allan Caidic, he attributes his harmonious married life of 16 years to Milotte to trust, understanding and respect for each other. Purefoods cager Jun Limpot, on the other hand, believes his ll-year union is based on love, trust and freedom.

The last person I'm about to mention, deserves a halo when it comes to his role of husband and father.

Jojo and Butchick Lastimosa are now on their second decade of marriage. In all these 20 years, I've seen many temptress offer the apple to Jolas but none I know of has succeeded.

Explained Jolas: "Our marriage of 20 years is built on trust, commitment, and our mutual belief that God is what makes it stand through trials."

To our lady-readers who are on the lookout for husband material, I suggest you study this fine specimens, discover their common denominators and use these as guidelines when you make your search. I assure you you won't go wrong. Happy love week to all!

***

HOOPVINE: Air 21 governor/team manager Lito Alvarez is excited over his second meeting with the Big J today. An old friend, Lito has offered help and support to the Big J when reports said he would run for a Senate seat. Since he's not, Lito has made another offer: why not coach Air 21. He will know today if the Living Legend is interested… Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero said this PBL conference has been full of ups and downs like a roller-coaster ride for the Postmasters that it's a wonder they made it to the finals. "Putting up a team to fill in the shoes of cagers like Joseph Yeo, LA Tenorio who had moved up to the pros and Robbie Reyes who had returned to the United States was very difficult. It's going to be a very tough series, which I believe will will go down the wire," Mikee said… Hapee owner Cecilio Pedro, on the other hand, thinks the chances are just about even for the protagonists—meaning, it's anybody's championship.

Alcano settles for 2nd in Korea

FILIPINO RONNIE ALCANO YIELDED to fellow world pool champion Mika Immonen of Finland, 7-4, late Tuesday to settle for runner-up honors in the 2nd Annual Brunswick KPT Pro Championships at the Lotte Department Store in Incheon, Korea.

The 2006 WPC winner Alcano, top player of Bugsy promotions and acknowledged by the US-based Billiards Digest magazine as "The Most Improved Player" in 2006, settled for the $4,000 (about P196,000) prize.

Immonen, a frequent Manila visitor and the 2001 WPC ruler, captured the top prize of $10,000 in the event organized by the Dragon Promotion outfits owned by Korean-American pool wizard Charlie Williams.

Alcano won the event in 2005 while no tournament was held last year.

A news release from the Dragon promotion said Alcano might have made some people superstitious with a 9 ball on the break in the first game, but Immonen just laughed it off in his chair and came back with a break and run.

Both players traded games and both played superbly until 3-3. Finally, Immonen caught a break and took the lead for the first time at 4-3. The rolls started to go sour on Alcano and Immonen crept up to a 6-4 lead which he sustained to the end, the release added.

Alcano trounced Japanese ace Kenjie Masauchi, 7-2, in the semifinals to arrange a showdown with Immonen, who bested another Japanese bet, Tomoo Takano, 7-1.

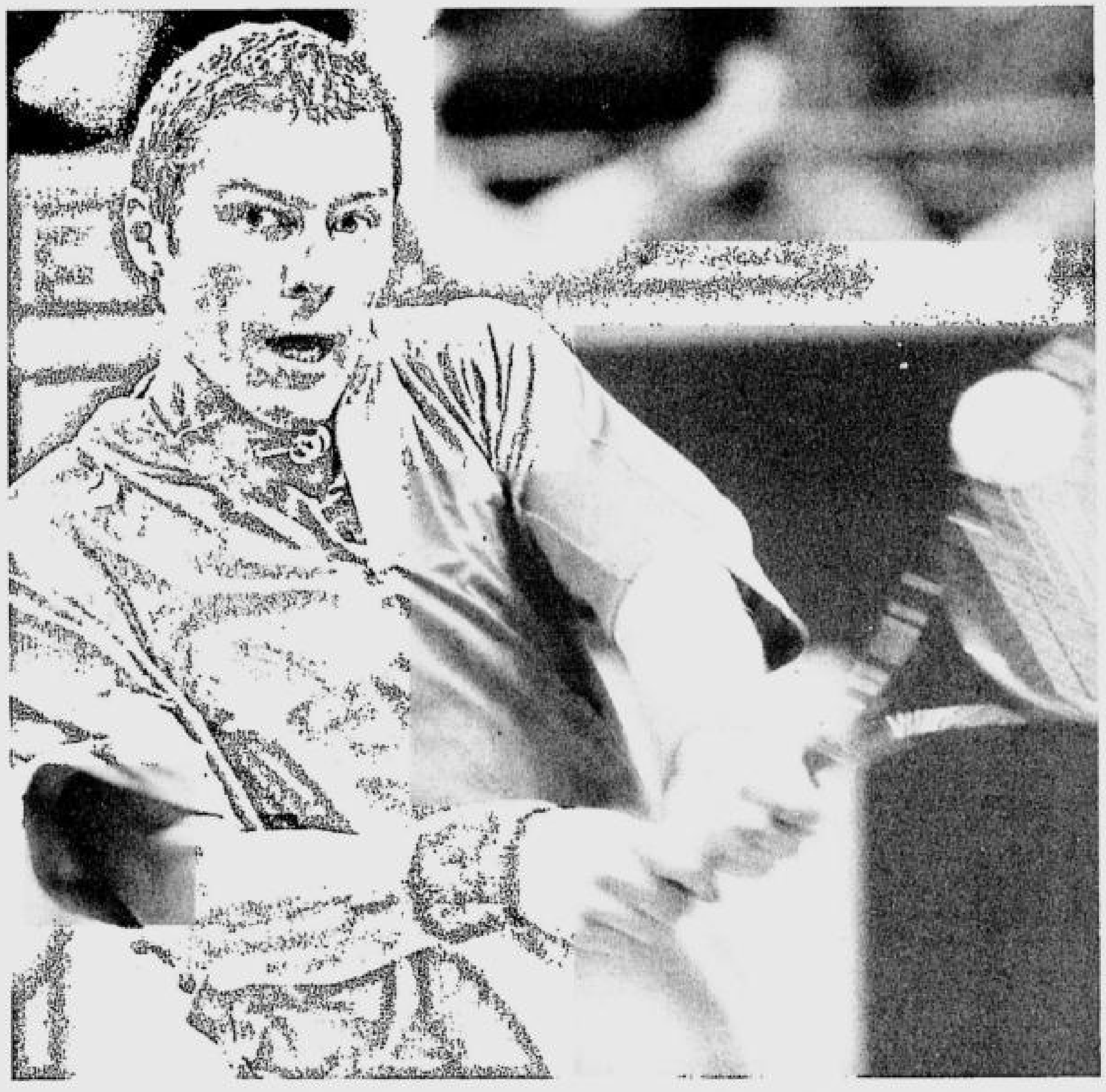
Takano, fresh from winning the 17th Annual All Kansai 9-Ball Open at the Mag Suminoe Billiards Hall in Osaka, Japan last month, and Masauchi settled for $2,000 as losing semifinalists.

Dennis Orcollo, Philippine billiards' money game king finished in the Korean Open in the last eight while countryman Dondon Razalan of Calauag, Quezon and Roland Garcia of Magalang, Pampanga failed to reach the money round.

Yuram Cha, a 19-year-old local bet defeated Kyoko Sone of Japan to emerge champion in the women's side. It was the first major title for Yuram, who ousted elder sister 21-year-old Boram in the semis to reach the finals.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

ALCANO (left) with Orcollo. CONTRIBUTED
PHOTO/THORSTEN HOHMANN



VICTORIOUS: Marat Safin of Russia hits a backhand against Scott Oudsema, Tuesday during a first round match at the SAP Open in San Jose, Calif. Safin won, 6-4, 7-6 (3). AP

Trinidad heads group tasked to form Seaba five

By June Navarro

CHINO TRINIDAD, THE COMMISSIONER of the Philippine Basketball League, will head the five-man committee tasked by the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas to form a national team for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships.

Trinidad, one of the representatives of the commercial sector in the 25-man board of trustees of the organization, will have Christian Tan, Wilson Young, Michele Lhuillier and Junjun Capistrano as members in the committee.

Trinidad said the group has scheduled a meeting with Chot Reyes today to get an overview of the program the national coach has drawn up for the Seaba campaign of the team tentatively set in Kuala Lumpur three months from now.

Winning the Seaba is the country's passport to the Fiba-Asia championships in Saitama, Japan to be held in July where two slots are up for grabs for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Should Reyes meet the expectations of the committee today, Trinidad said the San Miguel Beer coach in the PBA would be given a blanket authority on formation of the team.

Whether professional or amateur, the composition of the team will hinge on the decision of the five-man committee, which is mandated by the BAP-SBP hierarchy to either accept or reject the proposal of Reyes.

Reyes earlier indicated that the country should send a team made up of PBA stars in the Seaba so that by the time the Fiba-Asia comes, the Nationals have already reached peak form.

Under the constitution and by-laws of the BAP-SBP, lesser tournaments, like the Seaba and the Southeast Asian Games, will be the responsibility of a five-man committee composed of three directors from the collegiate sector and two from the commercial sector.

Elite tournaments such as the Fiba-Asia, Asian Games, World Championships and the Olympics will fall under the jurisdiction of the professional sector, the PBA in particular.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Olympic Committee executive board goes through the formality of sifting through the documents submitted by the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas today before calling a general assembly tomorrow to decide on the application for membership of the country's new cage body.

Herrera, Manipol face tough 10K rivals

THE COUNTRY'S TRACK STARS WILL BATTLE it out for top honors when the 2007 DZMM Takbo Para sa Kalikasan is held at the Quirino Grandstand on Sunday.

National team members Rene Herrera and Mercedita Manipol will be hard-pressed to defend their respective crowns as equally capable runners have entered the eighth edition of the 10-kilometer race.

Picked to challenge Herrera for the men's title are two-time Olympian Eduardo Buenavista and last year's runner-up Bernardo Desamito.

The women's title race, on the other hand, is expected to be a tossup between Manipol, the country's undisputed queen of the 10K race, and long distance specialist Ailene Tolentino.

The benefit race, which begins and ends at the Quirino Grandstand via Roxas Boulevard in Manila, offers P70,000 in cash prize as well as trophies and medals to the top finishers in the 10K race as well as the 3K and 5K side events.

The 10K overall champion and the top female finisher will each get P10,000 with the second and third placer getting P6,000 and P4,000 respectively. In the 5K run, the overall champion and first female finisher will each get P3,000 with the second and third placer receiving P2,000 and P1,000, respectively.

There will be special awards for the group with the biggest delegation with the Family para sa Kalikasan also receiving P2,000 and a trophy. The top male and female finisher in the 10K and 5K run will receive P1,000 each, while the oldest male and female runner will receive P500 and a medal.

Proceeds of this event will go to the rehabilitation of the La Mesa Watershed.

Invited to fire the starting gun and award prizes to the winners are Ms Gina Lopez, Peter Musngi, VP Manila Radio Division and Sports, Angelo Palmones, DZMM Station Manager and Director of Special Projects Manila Radio Division. The race will start at 6 a.m.

Race organizer Rudy Biscocho said more than 2,500 have already enlisted for the event. He advises participants to be at the assembly area at the parade grounds of the Quirino Grandstand not later than 5 a.m. for the pre-race program and briefing.

RENE Herrera: 2003 SEA Games champ.

Adamson gains UAAP finals

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY BREEZED PAST University of the East to reach the finals, but not University of the Philippines which got stalled after yielding to University of Santo Tomas in UAAP Season 69 softball yesterday at the Rosario Sports Arena in Pasig City.

Cloiene Muyco, Jessel Taladtad, Yocel Aguilar and Rachel Yasas each belted a home run in the Lady Falcons' 8-0 shutout of UE, thus shaking off the stigma of a 4-3 loss to UP last Saturday that prevented them from bagging their eighth title via a sweep of the eliminations.

The Lady Falcons were No. 1 after the two-round eliminations for the twice-to-beat advantage over No. 4 UE, which could only send a runner on second base—Claire Laurilla—at the top of the fourth inning.

Adamson will face either UP or UST, the No. 3 team in the semifinals which aped the Lady Maroons' role as spoiler.

The Tigresses nipped the Lady Maroons, 2-1, after eight innings also yesterday in the other semifinal to forge a rubber match for the second championship berth at 10 a.m. tomorrow also at the Rosario diamond.

UP and UST are even this season, with the Lady Maroons winning in the first round of the eliminations, 2-0, and the Tigresses winning, 6-3, in the second round. The UST-UP tussle went scoreless in regulation play.

Cardona new PSA president

ALDRIN CARDONA, SPORTS EDITOR OF The Daily Tribune, was elected president of the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) on Tuesday, succeeding Malaya sports editor Jimmy Cantor, who served the 58-year old organization of sports media practitioners for three full terms.

Also elected were Teddyvic Melendres of the INQUIRER as first vice president; Rey Bancod of Tempo, second vice president; Riera Mallari of the Manila Standard-Today, secretary; Gerry Ramos of People's Journal, assistant secretary; Jun Lomibao of Business Mirror, treasurer; and Tito Deblois of Abante, auditor.

Manila Bulletin sports editor Ding Marcelo will serve as chairman of the PSA Central Board and Board of Senior Advisers, which include Lito Tacujan of Philippine Star, Recah Trinidad of the INQUIRER, Al Mendoza of Philippine Chronicle, Joe Antonio of People's Journal and Cantor, who will also sit as ex-officio president.

Comprising the PSA expanded board are: Dina Marie Villena (Pilipino Star Ngayon), Ana Federigan (Taliba), Dennis Inigo (Balita), Ed Andaya (People's Tonight), Gilbert Episcope (Abante Tonite), Ronnie Nathanielsz (Manila Standard-Today), Quinito Henson (Philippine Star), Perry Legaspi (Tumbok) and Frederick Nasiad (Bandera).

Committee chairmanships in education, ethics, sports, finance and special projects will be filled in during the first board meeting to be set soon.

Camry Cup tomorrow at Wack Wack

MORE THAN A HUNDRED INVITED guests of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. are seeing action in the 1st Camry Invitational Cup scheduled tomorrow (Friday, Feb. 16) at the fabled east course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The invited players will be disputing the top three awards in three different divisions for dealers, customers and media in the 18-hole tourney. The shotgun tee-off is set at 7 a.m.

A Toyota Camry 3.5Q is at stake as a prize for an ace on the 16th hole.

The winners will receive trophies and gift certificates. There will be fun holes that include the longest drive, nearest-the-pin and most accurate drive. Attractive raffle prizes are to be given away.

TMPC officials Hiroshi Ito (president), Kenji Nakashima (EVP) and Daniel Isla (First Vice President) will lead the entries from the host company.

They will be joined by national dealers including Reginaldo Oben, Art Macapagal, Francis Laurel. From the government side are DOTC Sec. Larry Mendoza and National Treasurer Omar Cruz and among the customers are Sta. Elena president Edward Tiu, Rico Brizuela of Airlift Asia and Chito Macapagal of Unilever.

SPORTSWATCH

Mighty Filter Kings dump AFL five

THE MIGHTY FILTER KINGS NOTCHED THEIR FIRST BACK-TO-BACK WINS IN the Metropolitan Basketball Invitational Tournament Monday by crushing Athletes for Life squad, 95-60, at the Metro gym in Mandaluyong City. The Filter Kings notched their third win in four starts. "We played almost perfect basketball," said coach Lito Vergara. "Our aggressiveness in both ends of the court spelled the difference." Hotshot Terrence Tang topscored for the Filter Kings for the third time as he logged 20 points. Four other Mighty players scored in double figures as the Filter Kings ousted Athletes for Life in almost all departments. Cons Ong and Joseph Chua also shone on the offensive end for the Filter Kings as they tallied 18 and 17 points, respectively. Clark Torrente and Sam Gulayan combined for 20 points.

St. Stephen meets CKSC in finals

ST. STEPHEN'S HIGH SCHOOL TAKES ON CHIANG KAI SHEK COLLEGE IN THE best-of-three finals to determine the winner in the 4th Baden Powell Cup Scout Basketball Tournament 2007. Bearing a clean slate since the eliminations, St. Stephen's needed only one game in the semifinals to dispose of Philippine Jin Nan Institute, 108-41, thus entering the finals as favorites to capture this year's crown. On the other hand, reigning titlist Chiang Kai Shek College had a more formidable task of having to beat Philadelphia High School, the Group B top qualifier, twice in the semifinals to make it to championship round. CKSC won game one, 67-59, to force the rubber match. CKSC won 90-79, on Jan. 11 to nail the second finals slot.

PBA photo contest gets Accel support

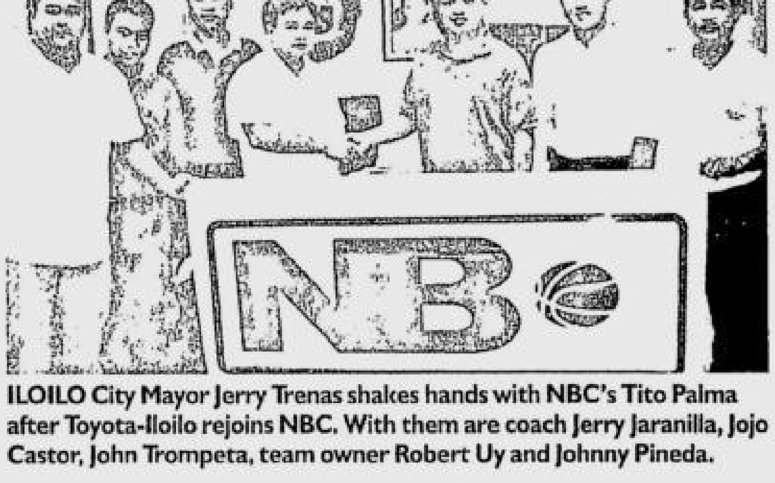
TOP SPORTS APPAREL ACCEL IS SPONSORING THE TALK 'N TEXT PBA Philippine Cup photo contest offering a total purse of P74,500, including P25,000 for the first prize winner. Open to all professional photographers covering the PBA games, the contest will accept photographs taken and published from Oct. 1, 2006 up to Game 2 of the Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup Finals between Ginebra San Miguel and San Miguel Beer. The subject matters include PBA personalities, PBA audience and PBA game situations. "This is in recognition of the photographers' role in helping generate interest in the league, particularly in the upcoming PBA finals and we are proud to be in the forefront of this undertakings," said Accel president Willy Cruz.

Timbangan cockfest at Las Pinas today

BIG PRIZES AWAIT TODAY'S WINNERS IN ANOTHER EXCITING COCKFIGHT format at Las Pinas Coliseum, dubbed as Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan beginning at noon. Registration starts at 7 a.m. The fastest win champion will be declared after every 10 fights and shall receive a guaranteed prize of P20,000. Likewise, the overall fastest win champion will get P15,000 and one refrigerator as bonus; second placer, one refrigerator and slowest win champion, P5,000 and one refrigerator. The event will be hosted by the Webber 45 group and has an entry fee of P1,650. Slated this Saturday is the LPC 3-cock derby with E. Almaz as host. For inquiries: 873-1040 and 874-3910 (Julius).

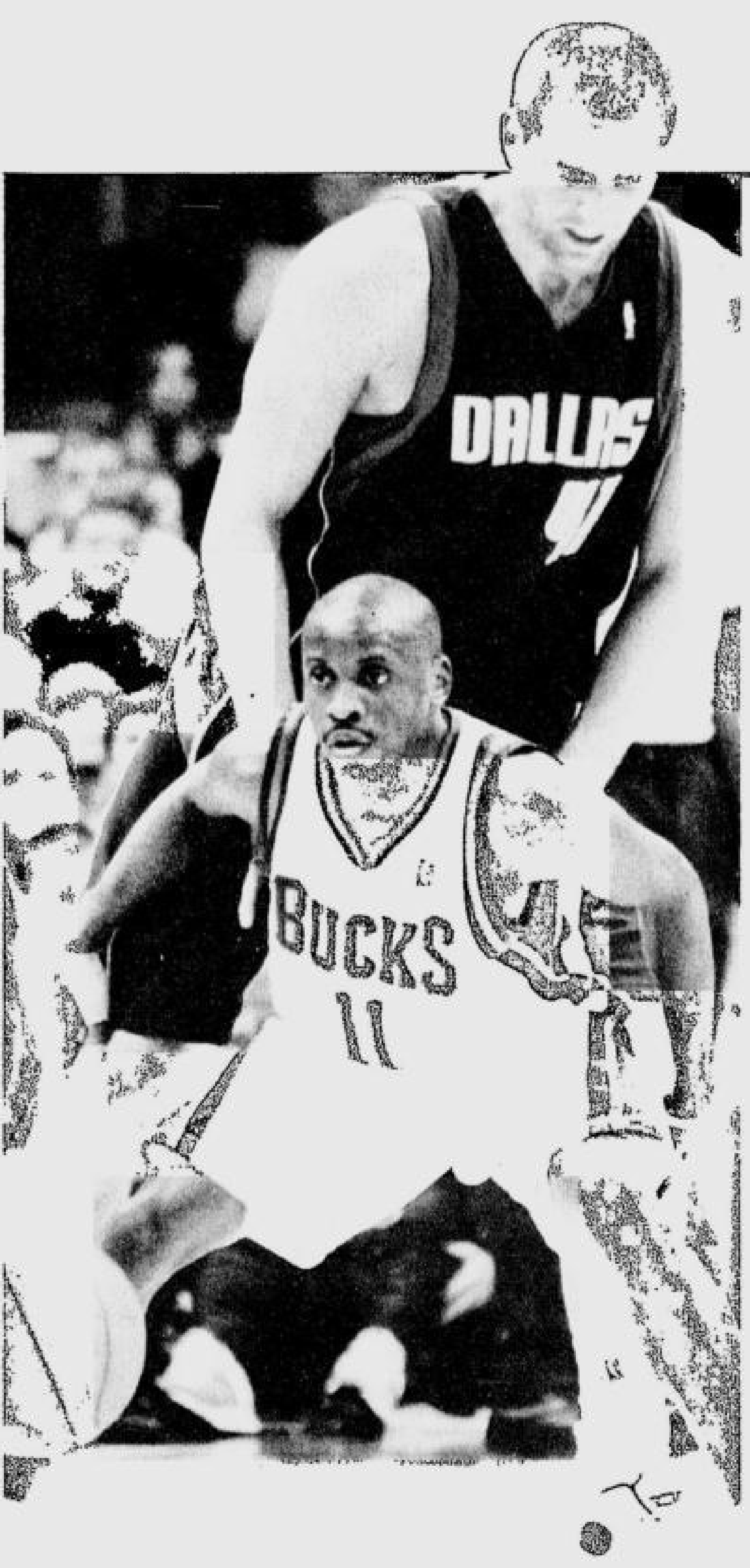
Makati stagfests screening starts March 1

SCREENING AND WINGBANDING OF STAGS STARTS ON MARCH 1 IN LINE with the 2007 stagfighting season at Makati Coliseum. Farm-to-farm screening will be handled by the Makati Coliseum screening committee and gamefowl breeders may contact 896-3545 and 895-6475 or 0906-2682911 for appointment (Joan or Stephanie). Stag derbies of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) as well other bigtime stagfests will be held at Makati Coliseum in September, October and November. Meanwhile, the PCAP 5-cock derby series returns on Monday. Entries are due for submission on Sunday, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.



ILOILO City Mayor Jerry Trenas shakes hands with NBC's Tito Palma after Toyota-Iloilo rejoins NBC. With them are coach Jerry Jaranilla, Jojo Castor, John Trompeta, team owner Robert Uy and Johnny Pineda.

SPORTS



MILWAUKEE Bucks 5-foot-5 guard Earl Boykins runs into a screen by 7-foot Dallas Mavericks forward Dirk Nowitzki in their NBA game. AP

Wade generates Heat; Raptors subdue Bulls

MIAMI—THE DEFENDING NBA CHAMPION Miami Heat returned to the .500 mark for the first time since November by beating the Portland Trail Blazers 104-85 on Tuesday.

Dwyane Wade overcame a bruised shoulder to score 35 points, 16 in the last quarter, and help the Heat (26-26) to their seventh win in eight games.

"We're just looking forward to keep going on this path," Wade told reporters.

Miami has battled injuries most of the season, including a lengthy one to Shaquille O'Neal, but the team, including head coach Pat Riley, is getting healthy going into the All-Star break.

Riley announced before the game that he would return to coaching after the break. Assistant coach Ron Rothstein handled the team while Riley recovered from hip and knee surgery, going 13-9.

"I'm just glad we won," Rothstein told reporters. "Now this is our launching pad for after the break."

Portland stayed with the Heat until Miami took over in the fourth quarter, when Wade outscored the entire Blazers roster and Miami outgunned Portland 31-15.

Udonis Haslem scored 12 points for the Heat and O'Neal was limited to just six points in his 23 minutes as he continues to rebound from knee problems that sidelined him for 35 games.

Zach Randolph led Portland with 17 points but could not stop the Trail Blazers (22-31) losing to the Heat for the fifth straight time.

The Toronto Raptors ended a 15-game losing streak against the Chicago Bulls after Chris Bosh hit two free throws with 2.1 seconds left to secure a 112-111 victory.

Tim Duncan scored 21 points as the San Antonio Spurs took advantage of the absence of Jason Kidd to score an easy 107-82 win over the New Jersey Nets. Kidd missed the game with a lower back sprain and is expected to be out until after the All-Star break.

Mike Miller had 22 points as the Memphis Grizzlies won for just the 14th time this season, downing the New Orleans Hornets 108-104 to end their three-game win streak.

The Dallas Mavericks held the Milwaukee Bucks to just 11 points in the fourth quarter to beat them 99-93. Dirk Nowitzki of Dallas had 38 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists. *Reuters*

Girls prefer cagers over bankers

DENVER—AT 6-FOOT-11, 235 POUNDS, Jamal Sampson is one imposing banker.

That is, until someone blows his cover.

"I'm in a club, telling a girl about my job, and, you know, she doesn't look very interested," said Sampson, 23. "But then someone comes up and says, 'Hey, you're not a banker, you play ball.' After that, she's all up on me, and so are the other women. It doesn't feel right."

The fact that Sampson's real job is playing pro basketball for the Denver Nuggets pretty much assures him of a date anywhere north of Antarctica. But for a guy who someday wants to meet the woman of his dreams, settle down and get married, being an NBA player can be more hindrance than help at times.

So on this, the most romantic of days, the single Sampson says he's looking for the perfect woman; somebody who can listen to him and feel comfortable talking about herself; someone who can be a partner and not simply a fan. Or be after his money.

"I want to find someone who is interested in me because I'm me," he said, "not because I play in the NBA."

Sure, the romantic plight of a man who gets paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to put a sphere in a cylinder is hardly a burning societal issue. But consider this: It really can be hard for a male athlete to develop a healthy relationship with women, said John F. Murray, a Palm Beach, Florida-based sports psychologist who has studied the issue.

"You look at all their traveling, the money, the fame, and it's hard for them to meet anyone besides groupies," Murray said. "These guys have to decide very quickly the reason why a woman is interested in them. It can be very lonely."

J.R. Smith knows the feeling. The Nuggets guard entered the NBA directly from high school and found the road to fame and fortune difficult to navigate.

So his mother, Ida Smith, took control for him.

"She was always worried about me, that women were after my money," said Smith, now 21 and in a committed relationship. "I'd bring a girl home to her, and she'd be like: 'What's your name? How much do you make? Where do you work? Do you have any kids?' It was really hard at first when she acted like that, but I realize now that she was just trying to protect me."

Charlie Brown, a North Carolina psychologist who has studied celebrities' relationships, says the most successful partnerships usually occur after athletes return to their roots and hang out among those who aren't impressed with their status.

"There's a comfort level that's not there at other times," he said. "For the athlete, they don't have to be on edge about a person's reason for talking to them."

Nene, the Nuggets' bulky Brazilian forward, found love in his home country, marrying a woman who had never been to Denver.

And Nuggets forward Eduardo Najera and newly acquired guard Steve Blake both married their college sweethearts.

"I'm one of the lucky ones because I found someone to love early in my life," said Blake, 26, who met his wife, Kristen, as a sophomore at the University of Maryland. *New York Times*

Bets off in All-Star Game

Percy D. Della

COMMENTARY

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—The world's biggest basketball pickup game will be played in Las Vegas, Nevada on Sunday night (Monday morning Manila time).

Will it be Kobe Bryant and the West All-Stars over LeBron James and the East's best?

No bet!

That's right. It may sound absurd but the earth's gambling Mecca won the right to host the National Basketball Association's 56th All-Star game with a monumental twist.

It won't allow any betting whatsoever on this prime time spectacle for the sport's egos at large.

For Las Vegas to get the All-Star Game, NBA Commissioner David Stern secured a firm agreement with the city's casinos—that they would not take wages on the game.

Las Vegas becomes the first non-NBA city to host the All-Star in the league's 61-year history, raising speculation, some say the specter, that it's next in line for an NBA franchise—and its first ever professional team.

But then Stern himself has doused the ember before it turns into a flame.

In a recent interview with the Las Vegas Review Journal, Nevada's biggest newspaper, Stern said talk about Las Vegas as an NBA city is "not warming."

"I would say we're recognizing Las Vegas's attractiveness as a destination, while at the same time recognizing there is this one little issue—called sports betting," stressed Stern.

Stern's strange bedfellow in bringing the All-Star game to Sin City—its flamboyant mayor, Oscar Goodman—has a different take.

The 67-year-old Goodman considers Las Vegas the "safest" place to play professional games. He cites a 1994 point-shaving scheme at Arizona State University in 1994 that was uncovered by the city's casinos and the Nevada gambling board, which regulates sports bookmaking.

"Connections between organized crime and professional sports are unfounded," said, his honor, a former lawyer to Mob figures—including "Tony the Ant" Spilotro, portrayed by Joe Pesci in the film "Casino."

Anyway, back to the world's biggest pickup game to be telecast live on TNT to 200 countries, including the Philippines.

Two-time NBA most valuable player Steve Nash, who had to pull out of the All-Stars because of injury, calls the weekend show "kind of weird."

"I really like playing competitive games. Games that are loose, it's not really my cup of tea," Nash told USA Today newspaper. "The fans want highlights," he said. "It's difficult sometimes to make real plays if you're looking for them, instead of them just happening."

* * *

It appears that Manny Pacquiao's distraction is Freddie Roach's windfall.

While Pacquiao navigates the triggered minefield of politics, Roach will train Oscar De La Hoya. The stakes are high for Roach: $1.3 million—believed to be the biggest one-fight trainer's fee in history.

Roach will take the reins of the Golden Boy's physical and mental regime for his May 5 blockbuster with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Although his $1.3-million payday is sweet, Roach told Los Angeles Times columnist Bill Dwyre that he "frets about the other fighters he has had to temporarily abandon, four of whom, including Pacquiao, will fight for world titles without him."

This all sucks if De la Hoya does not win, Roach said.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao may be looking at his first knockout loss in a spell. Not in the ring, but in the political arena.

Manny may be rich and famous. But he is up against the formidable incumbent congresswoman—Darlene Custodio of the time-tested Antonino clan of Mindanao politicians.

Throw in the towel even before the main event.

The best man for the job of congressional representative for the first district of South Cotabato is a woman.

Sports note: St. Pius X Institute, Cuyapo Nueva Ecija's catholic high school wants alumni to get in touch for its global homecoming on April 8. The get-together is for a worthy cause. Please visit www.cuyapousa.com for details.

Allen, Okur chosen as NBA All-Star game replacements

RAY Allen

MEHMET Okur

NEW YORK—SEATTLE's Ray Allen and Utah's Mehmet Okur were chosen by commissioner David Stern on Tuesday as injury replacements for the NBA All-Star game.

With Steve Nash (shoulder) and Allen Iverson (ankle) both pulling out of Sunday's game in Las Vegas, the Western Conference was in need of a guard. Allen is seventh in the league with 26.9 points per game.

Okur's clutch late-game play has helped Utah keep rolling despite the absence of Carlos Boozer, who was chosen for the All-Star game but also was forced to pull out because of a hairline fracture in his leg. That had left the Jazz, whose 34-17 record is third-best in the league, without a player in Sunday's game.

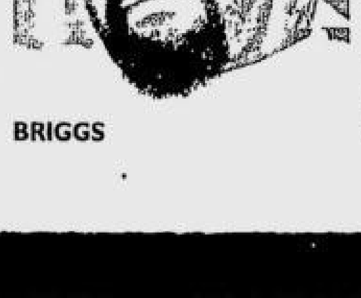
Allen is headed to his fourth straight All-Star game and seventh overall. Okur, from Turkey, is a first-time selection.

Besides Nash, Iverson and Boozer, Yao Ming of Houston also had to pull out. New Jersey guard Jason Kidd is going to miss the next two games with a strained lower back, but the Nets didn't say if he would play on Sunday.

Also, the NBA announced that Hornets point guard Chris Paul will replace Nash in the Skills competition on Saturday. *AP*

PNEUMONIA BOUT

Briggs pulls out of title defense



BRIGGS

NEW YORK—SHANNON Briggs withdrew from his first defense of his WBO heavyweight title Tuesday because he has pneumonia.

Briggs was scheduled for a mandatory defense against Russia's Sultan Ibragimov on March 10. Briggs won the crown last Nov. 4 by knocking out Sergei Liakhovich in the 12th round in Phoenix.

Promoters hope to reschedule the fight with Ibragimov in the spring. But it's uncertain if it would be held at Madison Square Garden, where the March 10 bout was set for the Theater. The main arena has the Big East men's basketball final that night.

Briggs is 48-4-1 with 42 knockouts. The unbeaten Ibragimov has won 19 fights with one draw and has 16 knockouts. *AP*

Bomb blows away leg of Iraqi booter

MELBOURNE—Iraqi first division player Ahmed Nasser lost one of his legs during a suicide bomb attack in Baghdad on Monday, the Asian Football Confederation reported on its Web site on Wednesday.

Naser, who plays for first division side Al Sena, was shopping with team mate Ihab Kareem when the bomb exploded in the Al Shourja commercial area of the Iraqi capital, killing over 80 people.

"Al Sena player Ahmed Naser, who is the brother of Al Zawra player Muhamad Naser, lost one of his legs following a suicide bombing," Tareq Ahmed of the Iraqi Football Association was quoted as saying on the site (www.the-afc.com).

Kareem was reported to have suffered a serious leg injury in the blast. *Reuters*

Footballer, 14, dies of brain hemorrhage

DHAKA—A YOUNG Bangladeshi footballer has died of a brain hemorrhage after a clash of heads during a match, officials said Wednesday.

Omar Sharif, 14, suffered head injuries when he and another player challenged for the ball during an under-15s championship qualifying match in the southern town of Shariatpur on Sunday.

"The referee sent him off the field to rest for a while but when he came back he collapsed and lost consciousness," said Ahmed Sayed Al Fattah of the Bangladesh Football Federation.

The boy was transferred to hospital in Dhaka for treatment but died early on Tuesday, he added.

"The medical report said Sharif died of a brain haemorrhage," he said. *AFP*

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Sabe ang dating, lakas ng hatak!
Max. Diesel. Max.
PETRON DIESEL MAX

German, Singapore firms investing in Maynilad

Original French stockholder selling 16% stake

By Christine A. Gaylican

TWO NEW FOREIGN SHAREHOLDERS ARE TO take over the 16-percent stake of French firm Lyonnaise Asia Water (Holdings) Pty Ltd. (LAWL) in Maynilad Water Services Inc., a company official said yesterday.

Deutsche Bank AG and Singaporean financing firm Noonday Asset Management Group would acquire 8 percent each of LAWL's holdings, a company official who requested anonymity said in an interview.

This development coincided with LAWL's resignation from the new Maynilad board, which is now headed by Metro Pacific Investments Corp. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan.

"LAWL directors (in Maynilad) have given their resignation (letters) without naming replacements," said Jose Ma. K. Lim, Maynilad director and president of Metro Pacific Investments.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Metro Pacific Investments announced the election to the Maynilad board of Pangilinan as chair, and Lim, Randolph T. Estrellado, Isidro A. Consunji, Herbert M. Consunji, Jorge A. Consunji, Eric O. Recto and Leovigildo S. Veroy as directors. There was no representative from LAWL.

The Lopez group and LAWL formed Maynilad after winning the bidding for the west zone concession in 1997. But after almost six years of operations, it filed for court rehabilitation due to unsettled foreign loans, which were later assumed by the MWSS.

The DM Consunji Inc.-Metro Pacific Investment consortium later won the bidding for the right to continue operating the concession area of Maynilad.

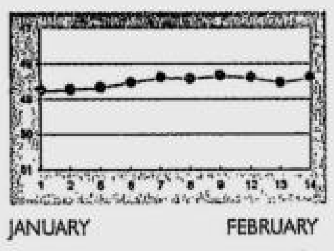
Rosario Bernaldo, designated court receiver for Maynilad, said in another interview that the French shareholder has not formally informed her nor the rehabilitation court of its planned divestment from Maynilad.

"The (equity holdings) were allegedly sold to a third party but this has to be manifested in court through a formal pleading by Lyonnaise," Bernaldo said.

Maynilad covers Manila (except San Andres and Sta. Ana), parts of Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Cavite City and some towns of Cavite province.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



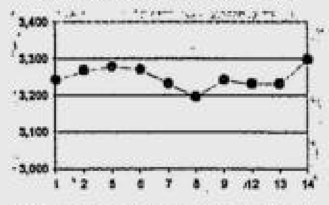
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 48.385 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 14, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares surge 2.07%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED SHARPLY higher yesterday, adding 2.07 percent as strong gains on Wall Street overnight provided a clear lead, dealers said.

They said the market closed at its highest level in nearly 10 years after Wall Street's rally encouraged investors to resume buying of select blue chips.

The composite index gained 67.03 points at 3,300.94 after trading between 3,304.37 and 3,233.91. The broader all-share index rose 36.97 points to 2,078.11.

Gainers outnumbered losers 83 to 48 with 46 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 9.96 billion shares worth P5.22 billion.

"The upsurge in the US market encouraged investors to resume buying in select big caps," DA Market Securities president Nestor Aguila said.

"Sound economic fundamentals are also intact and this justifies the market's uptrend," he added, citing the strong peso, easing inflation and interest rates, and the government's improving fiscal performance.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was one of the biggest

SHARES/ B2

Gov't warned against wasting ODA funds

By Doris C. Dumlao

ECONOMISTS HAVE CAUTIONED the government against an official development assistance (ODA) borrowing binge now that the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee was stripped of its function to scrutinize foreign-assisted infrastructure projects.

Former Economic Planning Secretary Felipe Medalla said during a Foundation for Economic Freedom forum with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves that the government must find a reasonable middle ground now that future infrastructure project approvals would bypass the ICC.

"I was told that ICC review is no longer necessary and proponents can now go directly to the agencies. I'm a bit worried about this especially if there will be a player that's probably not disciplined by multilateral rules. That's an area that the government must look at—what ODA borrowing will look like," Medalla said.

He said it would be a cause of concern if the implementing agencies themselves would handle the project screening without any external check-and-balance system.

Teves said the government had received a memorandum from the World Bank, which co-chairs

GOV'T/ B2

Investors seek transparency in Transco rebid

By Abigail L. Ho

THE EUROPEAN Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines said the recent unsuccessful bidding for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession would leave "a bad taste" in the mouth of prospective European investors as it was already the fourth time that the government had failed to privatize the concession.

In a briefing yesterday, ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher said the fact that there had already been four attempts to privatize the Transco concession—three through public bidding and one through negotiations—should be enough to make the government concerned about its effect on future investments.

"The concerns of the companies that participated in the biddings should be addressed. All related risks have to be addressed, including the issue of the franchise," he said.

"It creates a bad taste somewhere. (The government had) better address the concerns of the bidders and be transparent. We've always been saying that we'd like to see transparency," he added.

Asked how the government's decision to rebid the concession instead of conduct negotiations with the lone bidder—the consortium composed of local firm Citadel Holdings Inc. and Italian company Terna SPA—would affect how European investors viewed the Philippines as an in-

INVESTORS/ B2

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[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Crosswind 07	Sportivo A/T	1,135,000	170,250	11,455	
	Sportivo M/T	1,070,000	160,500	10,787	
	XTI M/T	899,000	134,850	8,828	
D-MAX	4x4 A/T LX	1,295,000	194,250	11,268	35,073
	4x4 M/T LX	1,240,000	186,000	10,703	38,187
	2006 4x2 LS M/T	995,000	149,250	9,814	
	2006 4x2 LS A/T	1,055,000	158,250	++10,430	
	2006 4x2 LX M/T	915,000	137,250	8,585	25,417
	2005 4x2 LX A/T	990,000	148,500	9,355	
ALTERRA 07	4x4 A/T	1,668,000	250,200	18,830	
	4x2 A/T	1,530,000	229,500	15,812	
	4x2 M/T	1,485,000	222,750	15,050	

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6. Financing transactions are available through BPI Family Savings Bank & PS Bank that have preliminary agreement with IPC for the promo.
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Jollibee profit grew 27% in '06

System-wide store sales up 13.5%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LEADING FASTFOOD CHAIN JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. said net profit in 2006 grew 27 percent to P2.15 billion from P1.69 billion in 2005 due to strong sales.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Jollibee said system-wide sales—which count sales of both company-owned and franchised stores—grew 13.5 percent last year.

Net income in the fourth quarter of 2006 reached P652 million, up 29 percent from P505 million in the same quarter the previous year.

"Our Philippine business grew at a high single-digit rate of 9.5 percent while our foreign business rose 30.2 percent in the fourth quarter. We are pleased with the strong performance of all our brands in practically every market we do business in," Jollibee chair Tony Tan Caktiong said in a statement.

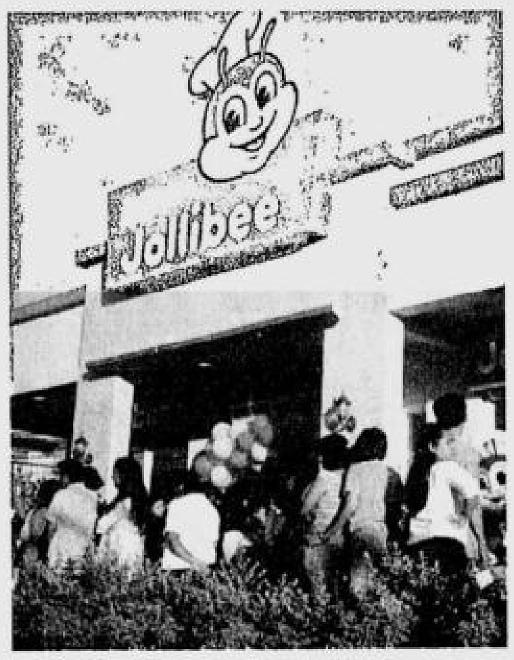
Tan Caktiong said he expected a further growth in profit this year.

"Sales has remained strong in the first one and a half months of this year and we look forward to a continued momentum in the months ahead. We are excited by our planned new product introductions, marketing campaigns and store network expansion both in the Philippines and abroad and by our planned entry into more countries," Tan Caktiong said.

Jollibee chief finance officer Ysmael Baysa, meanwhile, noted that operating profit before tax in the fourth quarter spiked 71 percent over the same period last year while the full year figure climbed 34.8 percent.

Net income did not grow as fast as operating profit due mainly to a higher income tax rate.

Baysa also noted that the cost of sales and general and administrative expenses improved due to a strong peso, which lowered Jollibee's import costs, and controlled expenses across all areas of the business.



JOLLIBEE is abuzz with plans to expand to more countries this year.

The Jollibee group opened 162 stores worldwide last year, 139 in the Philippines and 23 abroad, bringing its network to 1,357 stores in the country and 170 abroad.

Waist of time

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

GLORIAETTA IS THE LIVING PROOF THAT under this cute administration, consensus building is a complete waste of time.

Take the burning issue of the day: that failed bidding of Transco.

As the bidding overseer, the state-owned Psalm was trying to decide what to do next.

It had choices, actually, whether to negotiate a sale with the lone bidder Citadel-Terna, or go for another (the fourth) bidding.

But Gloriaetta perhaps thought it best to put her hands on her waist, go to media, and even before Psalm could make a decision, state her own … well, "position."

The rest is history.

Surely, if the Psalm board members knew what was good for them, Psalm had better sound like her echo.

And that's how Psalm made the decision—by not making one!

The question in business circles these days is this: Did other groups hold a parallel bidding for the big-ticket Transco somewhere in the vicinity of Malacañang?

***

SOME PEOPLE who know the local cement business must be anticipating another construction boom.

Word has it in the industry that a local independent cement group—meaning, it is not under the umbrella of the world cement giants like Cemex and Lafarge—is planning to put up two (again, TWO) brand new cement manufacturing plants.

Easily, the two factories can cost $1 billion. In short, huge investments!

Now, the only problem is, well, how will the group compete against ongoing big-time cement smuggling, said to be perpetuated by the cement industry's own customers.

You know—those big construction and real estate development companies.

***

ACCORDING TO insiders in the Ayala group, the big boss of the property business holds office every Wednesday—for one whole day—at the commercial center division.

The big boss of Ayala Land is the Harvard-educated Jaime Ayala, president and CEO, who worked for 19 years with the US firm McKinsey & Co.

Word has it that Jimmy Ayala spends Wednesdays not at his office at the Ayala group headquarters but at the commercial center division in Oakwood.

Hmm. No wonder, talk in property circles points to a head-on collision between Ayala Land and the country's top mall builders, namely the SM group of taipan Henry Sy and Robinson's Land of another taipan, John Gokongwei Jr.

Well, Ayala Land only has five malls today, and they are located in Makati, the Fort, Alabang and Cebu, where the Ayala group also happens to be the property developers.

Jimmy Ayala's initial targets for more (separate) malls are said to be north of the metropolis.

***

THE GOVERNMENT firm Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. wants a "third" party—meaning, other than contending groups at present—to acquire the under-PDIC-rehabilitation PBCom.

That's the Philippine Bank of Communications, whose PBCom Tower in Makati is reputedly the tallest building in the country.

Unfortunately, the bank also needs a P7-billion bailout from PDIC.

As a condition for the bailout money, PDIC wanted the existing PBCom stockholders to sell the bank to another and, hopefully, stronger bank.

According to a bank insider, however, PDIC's problem is that the condition is not in black and white.

You know—it was only a "gentleman's agreement."

And as you know, nothing is happening to the pact.

The bank is still caught in an impasse between taipan Lucio Tan, and the powerful newspaper (Manila Bulletin) owner Emilio "the Don" Yap.

Both want to acquire the bank.

Allied with the multi-billionaire Lucio Tan is the Luy family (copra trading), which is one of the three major shareholders of PBCom.

The two others are the Chung family (La Suerte Cigarette) and the Nubla family (sardines importation during the Marcos regime), both backed up by "the Don."

With the kind of "friendship" the two backers reserve exclusively for each other, one of the PDIC guys in PBCom fears that the stalemate might go on up to my next life.

Meanwhile, public money is caught in the bank, earning only 1 percent interest.

And the PDIC is helpless?

***

WE RECEIVED a letter from Adolfo Suzara, president of Webb Fontaine Pilipinas, an IT company that is one of the subcontractors of Unisys for the computerization of the Bureau of Customs. (*Breaktime, Feb. 1*)

He said that the contract was awarded to Unisys prior to ex-BOC head Bert (Hyatt 10 member) Lina's appointment as commissioner.

He goes: "As you correctly pointed out, Unisys Philippines subcontracted portion of the project but retained most of it …

"Whoever provided you information that made you conclude wrongly is definitely doing our country a disservice."

Tell you what, Adolfo, if I may call you Adolfo, it was not the commissioner himself who gave me the info.

***

OKAY, another former customs commissioner, Antonio Bernardo, teamed up with Damian Placido Jr., who used to be the legal director of the Bureau of Customs, to form a law office. (Bernardo & Placido Law Offices, tel. 7478385)

No, they do not want to enter into any subcontracting business with the bureau.

Gov't warned against …

From page B1

the consultative group of foreign donors, airing the same concern.

The finance chief said this change in ODA approval rule could be "a reaction to a reality or perception that we're moving very slowly in the area of approving the projects."

He agreed that the government must first find out the problem behind the backlog in infrastructure project approvals.

"If ever we agree to a situation where it would be the operating agency that is evaluating, we have to make sure that the operating agency is supported by the right people. Otherwise, the quality of evaluation will suffer," Teves said.

On the complaints that the ICC was very slow in project evaluation, Medalla said there would be ways to cure it without "disempowering" the inter-agency body.

"What's bad is that if there are agencies that are weak in doing all the processing… especially given the track record of some of these agencies, it's really scary," he said.

For the first time since nearly a decade of grappling with huge budget deficits, inflows from ODA are seen exceeding commercial borrowings this year. In the past, multilateral and bilateral lenders were reluctant to increase their credit line to the Philippines, which had no other recourse but to tap more expensive commercial borrowings such as bond floats to fill external funding requirements.

But now, the Philippines is seen as being in good position to reverse this trend given its greater flexibility to fund its infrastructure requirements.

Earlier, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said that China Export Import Bank alone, which will finance the controversial Northrail project, had committed to extend $2 billion in ODA each year for the next three to four years.

"But we have to be careful. Financing is not the problem. We have to make sure that the money goes to good projects and efficiently priced projects," Neri said.

Build brand in Europe, RP urged

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD EXERT MORE EFfort to boost its reputation as an investment site to encourage European companies to outsource some of their business processes here, said the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher said only a few European companies were investing in BPO services here because most of them have chosen to outsource their requirements to other European countries, such as the Czech Republic.

"The Philippines needs to have more branding in Europe to establish itself as a good outsourcing site," Schumacher said.

To do this, he said the Philippines should have more targeted missions to Europe and participate in more big trade shows and exhibitions in the continent.

"The Philippines needs to be more visible. We're not participating in many large IT events. It's the Filipinos, in particular, that we need to brand because they'll be the ones to perform the required services," he said.

He added that there were "billions worth of outsourcing dollars" that the country could capture from the European market, not only in the call center industry, but also in value-added services such as financial services.

He said the bigger trend was for American firms to set up their back-office requirements here, mainly due to the cultural affinity and the way Filipinos spoke English.

"Filipinos speak American English. Also, almost every Filipino has a relative somewhere in the United States. It's not the case for Europe, which is why it's harder to convince European firms to come here," he said.

The ECCP, together with various private sector, industry and government partners, has created Taskforce Europe-UK and other European Union countries, which will focus on "branding the Philippines in European target markets and influencing decision makers to outsource to the Philippines."

The target markets include the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia.

Investors seek transparency in Transco rebid

From page B1

vestment site, he said all was not lost and that the country could still redeem itself somehow.

"It's unfair, but it has happened many times before. If the failed bidding and the decision to rebid will lead to more transparency and good governance, then by all means (go on with the rebid)," he said.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), the agency tasked to privatize the Transco concession, last Tuesday decided to do another public auction of the contract.

"We consider the failed bidding conducted last Feb. 5 indicative of recurring issues that we need to urgently and effectively address before undertaking another bidding process. We will develop a concrete plan of action and find ways to enhance the value of the asset for the next bidding," PSALM said in a statement.

Shares …

From page B1

winners of the day gaining P80 to P2,565.

Conglomerate DMCI Holdings Inc. was the most actively traded stock due to several cross transactions worth P560.9 million but it ended unchanged at P7.20.

Conglomerate Ayala Corp. rose P20 to P640 and property developer Megaworld Corp. was up 25 centavos at P2.90. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 14, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.3	393,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	62	58	61.5	1,010,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	70.5	69	70	2,503,200
China Banking Corp.	780	825	780	820	7,730
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	600
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	5,830,000
Equitable Pci Bank Inc.	105	109	105	109	256,370
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	64	65	63.5	65	7,147,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	1,200
Philippine National Bank	49	49	49	49	29,500
Phil. Savings Bank	56.5	56.5	56.5	56.5	400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42	43.5	42	42	463,000
Security Bank Corp.	79	80	77	80	576,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	61	64.5	61	64.5	35,400
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	30,000
Bankard Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	100,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	552,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.1	6,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1680	1670	1660	1670	1,240
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.92	1.96	1.92	1.96	874,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	500	510	490	490	21,760
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2120	2125	2120	2125	1,020
Ivantage Corp.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.68	1,536,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	58,381,000
First Gen Corp.	54.5	57.5	54.5	57	1,711,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	82.5	82.5	80	82	613,300
Manila Electric Co. A	79.5	81	79	79	400,800
Manila Electric Co. B	80.5	82	79	79	1,512,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.8	9.9	9.7	9.7	2,139,000
Petron Corp.	4.55	4.65	4.55	4.65	3,362,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.3	4,080,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.24	479,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25.5	28.5	25.5	27.5	251,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43.5	44.5	43.5	44.5	468,800
RFM Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	140,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	132,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.46	590,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	61,400
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79	79	415,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.04	2.14	2.04	2.1	3,512,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	18	17.5	18	4,410,100
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	1.66	1.74	1.64	1.68	36,976,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.55	3,057,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	4	4.05	3.95	4.05	263,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.2	6,109,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5,000
Republic Cement Corp.	6.2	6.5	6.2	6.4	1,067,000
Supercity Rlty Dev. Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	4,000
		CHEMICALS			
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.4	8,214,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	18,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Active Alliance Inc.	3	3	3	3	20,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.28	14,830,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.5	0.55	0.5	0.51	320,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.014	0.012	0.013	1,089,500,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	38,000,000
Ayala Corp.	625	640	625	640	36,920
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.71	0.72	820,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.2	18,752,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	5	5.3	4.6	4.65	7,756,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	67,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	370,000
APC Group Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.44	0.44	62,640,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	30,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.24	4,238,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.7	1.64	1.7	62,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.86	1.86	1.82	1.82	60,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.6	529,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.46	592,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	31,857,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.2	7	7.2	81,454,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	4.95	5	1,926,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	100,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.1	3.25	3	3	931,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.75	12	2,323,400
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	100,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.62	0.47	0.55	1,210,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	6.3	6.6	6.1	6.4	3,422,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.2	2.26	2.18	2.2	2,227,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.019	11,100,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.23	0.23	13,690,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.75	0.7	0.75	360,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	33,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	397.5	397.5	390	390	390,620
South China Resources Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.72	13,000
Vivant Corp.	1.14	1.14	1	1	35,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.155	2,760,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.25	16.75	11,585,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.43	850,000
Belle Corp.	1.56	1.62	1.48	1.5	50,155,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.4	1.46	1.4	1.4	2,863,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.46	4,640,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.65	3.8	3.65	3.8	916,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.4	2.48	1,916,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	2,420,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,580,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.73	21,950,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	35,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	6,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.64	1.7	131,123,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	780,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.28	0.28	0.26	0.26	400,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	164,300,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.012	0.01	0.012	350,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	8,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.56	0.57	0.56	0.56	5,220,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.89	0.89	0.85	0.87	11,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.9	98,195,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	56,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	1,560,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.4	2.4	166,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.25	18.75	7,861,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.82	0.86	0.77	0.77	96,990,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	2,781,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc	11.75	12.25	11.75	12	3,965,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	210,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.125	0.115	0.115	9,720,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	0.38	0.45	0.38	0.45	20,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.5	25.5	24.5	25	366,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	62,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2.02	1.98	1.98	11,615,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1380	1380	1350	1375	7,140
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	2,639,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2485	2590	2485	2565	78,050
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.32	0.34	26,570,000
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	300,000
Ionics Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.55	2.55	369,000
IPVG Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.7	4.75	1,413,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	22,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.4	2.42	2.36	2.36	2,496,000
Philweb Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.035	78,900,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.05	4.05	4.05	4.05	68,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.75	26.5	24.75	25.5	1,756,300
Keppel Phils. Marine. Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	41,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	6,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.2	2.22	2,726,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	24,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.88	0.9	0.85	0.86	2,440,000
		EDUCATION			
Centro Escolar University	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	10,000
Far Eastern University	820	820	820	820	420
Ipeople Inc.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	80,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	2.42	2.8	2.42	2.75	22,280,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	27	26.5	27	1,750,500
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	40	40	40	40	5,755,100
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	20,000
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.9	5.4	5.6	823,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.9	459,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	187,900,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.4	9.5	9.2	9.2	628,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	32,700
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	18,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.14	1.16	107,025,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	2,440,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,560,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.027	0.025	0.026	333,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	85,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.015	0.013	0.014	5,630,600,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.9	4	3.9	4	6,236,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	19.25	17.5	18.75	706,600
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.79	0.79	0.74	0.75	920,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.42	1.42	1.26	1.28	17,086,000
		OIL			
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	910,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	110,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	16,900,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	609,400,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10	10	10	117,000

CURRENCIES

February 14, 2007

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.766989	1.000000	48.4520
Japan	Yen	0.006335	0.008260	0.4002
United Kingdom	Pound	1.493634	1.947400	94.3554
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098153	0.127972	6.2005
Switzerland	Franc	0.615216	0.802118	38.8642
Canada	Dollar	0.657400	0.857118	41.5291
Singapore	Dollar	0.497496	0.648635	31.4277
Australia	Dollar	0.595858	0.776880	37.6414
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.034453	2.652520	128.5199
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204508	0.266638	12.9191
Brunei	Dollar	0.495887	0.646538	31.3261
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023102	0.030120	1.4594
UAE	Dirham	0.208841	0.272287	13.1928
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.303800	63.1717
Korea	Won	0.000817	0.001065	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.098760	0.128763	6.2388
Argentina	Peso	0.247416	0.322581	15.6297
Brazil	Real	0.364227	0.474879	23.0088
Denmark	Kroner	0.134175	0.174938	8.4761
India	Rupee	0.017424	0.022717	1.1007
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219202	0.285796	13.8474
Mexico	New Peso	0.070094	0.091388	4.4279
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527612	0.687900	33.3301
South Africa	Rand	0.105449	0.137485	6.6614
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023188	0.030232	1.4648

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 13, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 13, 2007

BPO revenue seen increasing to $3.5B in '07

RP accounts for 1.02% of world market

By Ronnel W. Domingo

WITH TOTAL REVENUE FROM business process outsourcing services hitting $2.54 billion in 2006, the Philippines now accounts for 1.02 percent of the world market, according to global research and advisory firm XMG Inc.

The Victoria, Canada-based firm, whose work is focused on the Asia Pacific region, said the Philippine business process outsourcing revenue grew 41 percent last year from $1.8 billion in 2005.

For this year, the country's global BPO market share is projected to reach $3.5 billion or about 1.41 percent of the total.

In comparison, India's global market share last year was estimated at 10.6 percent, while latecomer China accounted for 3.56 percent. The bulk of the demand for outsourced services is still being served onshore in the United States.

XMG finds that about 94 percent of the Philippines' total revenue in 2006 came from the BPO and call center segments of the industry. About 5 percent or $140 million could be credited to IT services.

XMG chief executive Lauro Vives said the Philippines was still considered a green field site for IT services and had potential for growth relative to the other ICT-related sectors such as the call center.

"IT services must now take the lead alongside BPO in being the growth driver if the Philippines were to reach a 2- percent global market share by 2009," Vives added.

According to estimates, the Philippines currently has 79,469 active IT professionals and 120,000 call center agents serving both the local and global ICT services market.

"There could be a slight possibility of not meeting the forecast (revenue of $3.5 billion this year) if efficiencies and effectiveness in recruitment are not improved," Vives said.

In a forum held last month, Business Process Association of the Philippines president Dan Reyes said there were 244,675 workers employed in BPO operations—mostly in customer care, back office and software development service providers.

The government's BPO revenue estimates were, however, higher than XMG's at $3.6 billion for last year and $2.42 billion in 2005. This was due mainly to differences in "definitions and categorization" of projects done in the country.

In its projections for 2007, XMG said organizations with their own IT operations would have to compete with service providers in the war for the recruitment and retention of talent.

"This is more evident in the Philippines where further workforce development and deployment has been highlighted as an operational risk due to limited resource pool," XMG said.

The firm projects an 11.1-percent expansion of both foreign and domestic consumption of ICT services in the Asia-Pacific to hit $507 billion in value this year.

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PPA earmarks P909M for new projects

LUCIO C. TAN receives his certificate as the newest associate member of the Philippine Institute of Chemical Engineers (PiChe) from the organization's president for Metro Manila academic chapter, Nila Abella (left), and Nuna Almanzor (right), national president, during the organization's 68th founding anniversary. PiChe is the professional association of chemical engineers.

THE PHILIPPINE Port Authority has set aside P909 million for eight port development and expansion projects that are up for bidding this month.

There is one project each in the provinces of Quezon, Agusan del Norte, Palawan, Aurora, Guimaras, Sorsogon, and two projects in the province of Masbate.

The ports in these areas need reinforced concrete platforms, roll-on roll-off ramps, breasting dolphin, back-up areas, rock causeways, port lighting systems, mooring and fendering systems, and passenger terminal buildings.

The proposed San Antonio port development project in Pilar, Sorsogon has been allocated a budget of P177 million. It is expected to be completed in a year and a half's time. The Esperanza Port project in Masbate has a budget of P134 million and must be completed in a year's time.

The Claveria port project in Masbate will cost P125 million and must be completed in a year's time. The same goes for the proposed Sibunag Port improvement project in Guimaras, which has a budget of P92 million.

Meanwhile, the proposed development project in Taytay port in Palawan has a budget of P76 million while P61 million has been set aside for the Casiguran port project in Aurora province.

About P199 million has been set aside for the Nasipit port in Agusan del Norte.

According to the bid notice, the PPA will only deal with companies that are majority-owned by Filipinos and have due license from the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board and the Maritime Industry Authority. *Riza T. Olchondra*

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Big bike lovers, big peace weavers

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

IT WAS ON SEPT. 15, 1987 WHEN THE "On Any Sunday Riders" was formed by a handful of motorcycle enthusiasts.

The group tours as far as Aparri passing through Surigao, Tacloban, Legaspi, Manila, Banaue, Tuguegarao, Laog, Vigan and Baguio, all 3,000 kilometers of cross country adventure and fun.

In the early 2004, with the goal of promoting peace, goodwill, unity and tourism in Mindanao, the group decided to ride to Camp Abubakar, passing through major cities and key areas in Mindanao. This camp, once a home to some 15,000 Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels, has been transformed into a plantation of vegetables, fruits, rice, corn, coconut, coffee. It is now known as Camp Duma Sinsuat, in honor of the first Muslim member of the Cabinet who served during the term of former President Diosdado Macapagal and who distinguished himself as a man of honor and integrity.

The ride to Camp Abubakar was named "The Mindanao Ride for Peace" or MR4P.

MR4P has become an annual event for professional and amateur motorcyclists in Davao, visiting key areas in Mindanao, including peace and development communities. It is aimed at promoting peace-building and business in the region.

In 2004, about 150 big-bike riders from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao "rode" their way to Zamboanga City and Basilan province. They motored their way, amidst the dust and wind, to Regions 9, 10, 11, 12 and even in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The 2nd Mindanao Ride for Peace was also a success, generating 100 participants. The riders, coming from the business sector and the government, went on a three-day trip to promote the favorable peace and order situation in the island. The peace riders donated books and medicines in Carmen, North Cotabato; installed peace billboards in Digos, Malaybalay and Bukidnon, and distributed medicines in Camiguin—bringing the message of peace and corporate social responsibility in a more innovative manner.

The 3rd MR4P, held on Nov. 16-18, 2006, was special and different because foreign riders from Malaysia and Indonesia participated in line with the BIMP-Eaga (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area) cooperation efforts.

Twenty riders from the Eaga came in through the port of Zamboanga from Sadakan, Malaysia, and completed the 3,200-km ride passing the major cities of Zamboanga, General Santos and Davao City. These bikers said they wanted to push for the establishment of a regular transportation route from Sabah to Sandakan in Malaysia to Zamboanga and to the rest of Mindanao.

Datuk Douglas Primus, a Malaysian lawyer who heads the group said, "They said it was dangerous to visit Mindanao, but it did not stop us from coming because how could you know if it was safe or not if you would not see the place personally. For a rider who does not go to places, he should just sell his bike and stay home."

Last year's MR4P gained significant positive recognition among the motorcycle clubs nationwide as it helped promote a favorable and more realistic perception of the peace and order situation in Mindanao and bridge multicultural gaps.

Added to promoting peace, this activity has also helped unveil trade and investment opportunities in Mindanao and entice greater patronage for the various eco-tourist attractions in the island.

Unknowingly, perhaps, these riders in their big and expensive Harley Davidsons, BMWs and Hondas had added a positive dimension to the peace weavers of Mindanao

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao and chair of Mindanaworld Foundation Inc. Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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S&P officials arriving next week for review of RP performance

By Michelle V. Remo

REPRESENTATIVES OF RATINGS firm Standard & Poor's are coming to Manila next week to determine the country's chances of getting a credit ratings upgrade.

The S&P representatives will be in the country from Feb. 19 to 25 to meet with the Arroyo administration's economic team. Discussions are expected to center on the sustainability of the government's improving fiscal condition.

In a letter to the Department of Finance, the Investor Relations Office (IRO) of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) had requested documents showing the country's revenue and expenditure performance for 2006 for presentation to the S&P officials.

IRO said officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Bureau of Customs and the Department of Finance were scheduled to meet with the representatives of S&P on Feb. 21 to discuss fiscal matters. Other economic developments are expected to be discussed on the other days.

Earlier, S&P credit analyst Agost Bernard said the government's fiscal performance for 2006 gave a positive impact on its credit image. However, he said there was a need to ensure that the fiscal gains would be sustained before any adjustment in the country's credit rating could be made.

"The trends are very positive on all fronts and that will be taken into account in our next evaluation. The bottom line is, we have to ask the question of how sustainable and how durable these improvements are," Bernard had said.

For 2006, the government's budget deficit settled at P62.2 billion. This was about 50 percent lower than the P125-billion ceiling set by fiscal authorities for the year. It also marked a 58-percent reduction from year-ago's P146.8 billion.

Finance and budget officials attributed the decline in the deficit to increase in revenue collection and tight spending.

They said the failure of Congress to approve the proposed P1.053-trillion national budget for 2006 forced the government to operate using a reenacted budget from 2005, which was about P100 billion lower.

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF CONNECTION CHARGES AND RESIDUAL SUB-TRANSMISSION CHARGES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2007 ON THE EXCLUDED SERVICES COVERING THE EXISTING SUB-TRANSMISSION ASSETS OF THE NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO) AND ANY FUTURE CONCESSIONAIRE THEREOF, WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-007 RC

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION (TRANSCO),
Applicant.
x - x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on January 22, 2007, the National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO) filed an application praying for the Commission's approval of its connection charges and residual sub-transmission charges for calendar year 2007 on the excluded services covering its existing sub-transmission assets and any future concessionaire thereof, with prayer for provisional authority.

In said application, TRANSCO, alleged, among others, the following:

1. On June 13, 2006, the Commission resolved and issued its Decision and Final Determination on TRANSCO's Second Regulatory Period Application. Pertinent portion of which reads:

"xxx xxx xxx

2. To divide the reasonable costs which TRANSCO is allowed to recover during the Second Regulatory Period into three (3) components, to wit:

a. Those costs related to the activities of providing Regulated Transmission Services as defined in the TWRG which are effectively provided by Transmission Assets as defined in the document entitled "*Guidelines for the Sale and Transfer of the TRANSCO's Sub-transmission Assets and the Franchising of Qualified Consortiums*" promulgated by the Commission on October 17, 2003;

b. Those costs related to the activities of providing Transmission Connection Services as defined in the TWRG where the Transmission Connection Services are provided using Transmission Connection Assets (TCA) which are further defined in the document entitled "*Definition and Boundaries of Transmission Connection Assets*" (the CAD) promulgated by the Commission on May 23, 2006 (amended in August 2006 per ERC Resolution No. 41 – Applicant's note);

c. Those costs related to the activities of providing Residual Sub-transmission Services which are those services provided using Residual Sub-transmission Assets (RSTA) which are defined as the Sub-transmission Assets as defined in the document entitled "*Guidelines for the Sale and Transfer of the TRANSCO's Subtransmission Assets and the Franchising of Qualified Consortiums*" less those Transmission Connection Assets defined in the document entitled "*Definition and Boundaries of Transmission Connection Assets*".

3. To order TRANSCO to treat the Transmission Connection Service and the Residual Subtransmission Service as Excluded Services under the TWRG but not to treat them as contestable unless otherwise ordered by the Commission;

4. To order TRANSCO to recover the reasonable costs incurred in providing Transmission Connection Services and Residual Subtransmission Services under the document entitled "Rules, Terms and Conditions for the provision of Open Access Transmission Services", otherwise known as the (OATS) Rules, dated August 2004, as amended or under another document as approved by the Commission specifically for this purpose.

"xxx xxx xxx

(pp. 37-38, Decision dated June 13, 2006)

2. Effectively, the Commission carved out TRANSCO's Subtransmission Assets from the Transmission Assets. Hence, TRANSCO cannot not recover the cost of the excluded services from the Maximum Annual Revenue (MAR), but can recover the reasonable cost, as defined in Section 1.6.3 of the TWRG in accordance with the ERC-approved OATS Rules;

3. The Commission approved the 2006 Revised OATS Rules which embodies the charging policy or the methodology in determining for the applicable Connection Charges and Residual Subtransmission Charges. The Revised OATS Rules became effective on December 25, 2006 after its complete publication in a newspaper of general circulation;

4. Specifically, Annex IV, Module F of the 2006 Revised OATS Rules covers the Connection Charges and Residual Subtransmission Charges for the excluded services provided by TRANSCO to its connected customers.

Accordingly, TRANSCO computes and determines the customer Connection Charges and Residual Subtransmission Charges for the calendar year 2007 in accordance with the charging policy provided in Annex IV Module F of the 2006 Revised OATS Rules;

5. In particular, TRANSCO adopts the formula under Clauses F(AIV)3.2 and F(AIV)7.2 of the 2006 Revised OATS Rules, to wit:

$$\textbf{Charges (CC or RSTC)} = \frac{[ODRC_i \times WACC] + D_i + O_i + T_i + R_i}{12}$$

Where:

$ODRC_i$ = is the Optimised Depreciated Replacement Cost of the Connection Assets or Residual Sub-transmission Assets as determined under F(AIV)4.1 and F(AIV)8.1 of the Revised OATS Rules, subject to Rule B 20 of the OATS Rules

WACC = is the Weighted Average Cost of Capital as determined under F(AIV)4.2 and F(AIV)8.2 of the Revised OATS Rules

D_i = is the depreciation cost of the Connection Asset or Residual Sub-transmission Assets for the current year, as determined under F(AIV)4.1(c) and F(AIV)8.1 (c) of the Revised OATS Rules

O_i = is the operational and maintenance cost attributable to the Connection Asset of Residual Sub-transmission Assets for the current year, as determined under F(AIV)4.3 and F(AIV)8.3 of the Revised OATS Rules

T_i = is the corporate tax expense attributable to the Connection Asset or Residual Sub-transmission Assets for the current year, as determined under F(AIV)4.5 and F(AIV)8.5 of the Revised OATS Rules

R_i = is the short-fall, or surplus, in the Connection Charge or Residual Sub-transmission Charge collected for that Connection Asset or Residual Sub-transmission Assets, respectively, in the previous year, increased by an amount to reflect the time value of money calculated using the Weighted Average Cost of Capital as determined under F(AIV)4.2 of the Revised OATS Rules. If R_i is a surplus, it shall be expressed as a negative

6. In order to allocate the cost of Sub-transmission asset, where this is used by two or more Transmission Customers the formula provided in Clause F(AIV)7.3 of the Revised OATS Rules is applied, i.e.

$$\textbf{PRSC} = \frac{BD_i}{\sum BD_i}$$

Where:

PRSC = refers to proportion of the Residual Sub-transmission Charge

BD_i = the Generator Billing Determinant as determined under F(AI)2.2, F(AI)2.3 & F(AI)2.4 or the Load Billing Determinant as determined under F(AI)3.2, F(AI)3.3 & F(AI)3.4 as the case may be, for the Transmission Customer at the relevant Connection Point

$\sum BD_i$ = the sum of the Billing Determinants of all Transmission Customers at the relevant Connection Point

7. The following values and parameters established in the Final Determination were used in this Application in order to compute for the 2007 Connection and Residual Sub-transmission Charges:

Particulars	Connection Charges	Residual Sub-transmission Charges
Asset Classification	As identified and classified by the ERC	
ODRC Asset Values	2004 Asset values rolled-forward to 2007	
Asset Composition	Inclusion of new assets commissioned and in operation as of December 2006	
WACC	15.8739%	15.8739%
OPEX[1]	P103.0Mn	P220.8Mn
Corporate Income Tax[2]	P294.4Mn	P759.2Mn
Other Taxes[3]	P24.4Mn	P49.7Mn
Billing Determinant (kW)	To allocate the OPEX and TAXES, actual recorded billing determinants (kW) of 2005 were used. For new assets commissioned in 2006, actual billing determinants in 2006 were used.	

8. As a process, the rolled-forward Connection or Residual Sub-transmission assets do not include the ERC-approved capital expenditure levels[4] and disposals in the Final Determination and shown in the Table below:

ERC-APPROVED CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, Nominal (Php Mn)			
Asset type	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Connection	185.9	128.7	189.0
Residual Sub-transmission	23	95.8	325.5
ERC-APPROVED DISPOSAL, Nominal (Php Mn)			
Asset type	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Connection	485.1	0	0
Residual Sub-transmission	1,040.4	0	0

9. Based on the ERC-approved Revised OATS Rules formula, only actual capital expenditures are considered in the computation of Connection and Residual Sub-transmission charges;

In the same manner, only actual disposals of sub-transmission assets are deducted from the list of sub-transmission assets. For this purpose, the approved sale of sub-transmission assets to San Fernando Electric Corporation and Cabanatuan Electric Corporation were no longer included in the computation of Connection and/or Residual Sub-transmission Charges

10. For this particular application, TRANSCO would like to emphasize the following:

a. Regulated depreciation for the years 2006 and 2007 were considered;

b. 2005 values of Sub-transmission assets were rolled-forward to closing values of 2006 and 2007 without considering any capital expenditures;

c. 2005 values of Sub-transmission assets were rolled-forward to closing values of CY 2006 and CY 2007 without considering the disposals covered by contracts submitted to the Commission for approval;

d. In the rolling forward of assets no IDC Adjustment factors[5] of 1.08% and 0.93% or any escalation factor were imputed in the calculation;

e. ERC-approved OPEX and Taxes levels covered in the Final Determination were allocated based on particular customer assets over the total identified Connection or Residual Sub-transmission Assets or the formula of:

$$\frac{\sum \text{Optimized Depreciated Replacement Cost}}{\text{Connection or Residual Sub-transmission}} \times \text{OPEX or Taxes}$$

f. Only qualified Connection and/or Residual Sub-transmission assets are to be billed and used in the computation of the appropriate charges.

It is intended that the Connection and Residual Sub-transmission Charges of customers will be adjusted (on an annual basis) once assets are effectively disposed of and capital expenditures are incurred.

11. Following the pertinent recovery formula in Annex IV, Module F of the 2006 Revised OATS Rules and the foregoing statements, the 2007 Connection and Residual Sub-transmission Charges per customer are provided in **Annex A** of this Application; and

12. The instant Application does not include the recovery of reasonable costs from providing Connection and Residual Sub-transmission Services covered by any contractual arrangements.

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **March 8, 2007 (Thursday), at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.), at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines.**

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicants conclude the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicants, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA,** and **JOSE C. REYES,** Energy Regulatory Commission, this 24th day of January, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN**
Executive Director

rvm/TRANSCO/connection charges/notice of hearing

(Footnotes)

[1] 2007 Opex level in Tables 7.5 and 7.6 (pages 134 & 135) of the Final Determination
[2] 2007 Corporate Income Tax level in Tables 7.5 and 7.6 (pages 134 & 135 of the Final Determination)
[3] 2007 Other Tax levels in Table 7.5 and 7.6 (pages 134 & 135) of the Final Determination
[4] Tables 5.18 and 5.19 (page 89) of the Final Determination
[5] IDC adjustment Factor in Table 5.11 (page 84) of the Final Determination

(PDI - Feb. 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
BICOL UNIVERSITY
Legazpi City
Telefax No.: (052) 821-7939

Manila Office:
34-C St. Benedict Street
Paradise Village
Project 8, Quezon City
Tel. No.: 929-2785

Acknowledgment

To the benevolent and compassionate individuals and institutions, it is with tremendous joy that I, on behalf of Bicol University and the thousands of our hapless brothers in the province of Albay, would like to extend to you our sincerest gratitude. We commend your unselfishness and goodness of heart in sending your material and financial support that helped a lot in making our relief operations for the victims of typhoon Reming, which ravaged our province last November 30 more meaningful and successful.

For the last six weeks, we have held supplemental feeding, medical missions and distributions of relief goods to the different communities greatly affected by floods and mudflows from Mt. Mayon. We have reached out to the barangays of Lidong, San Isidro, Bagong San Roque, Fidel Surtida, San Fernando, Sta. Misericordia of Sto. Domingo, Albay; Padang and Bgy. 2, Em's Barrio of Legazpi City; Malobago, Tagas, Bañag, Busay and Malabog of Daraga, Albay; Libod and Salugan of Camalig, Albay; San Francisco, Travesia, San Rafael and Maninila of Guinobatan, Albay bringing with us provisions that have come from you.

Your kindness and nobility reflect your love for your brothers, especially those who are in dire need. You have become an inspiration for us Christians who really would like to walk in Christ's teaching – to love our neighbors. Indeed, you have done your part in alleviating the plight of your brothers here in Albay and you have encouraged them to move on, knowing there are still many good men and women like you who care:

- Albay Medical Society
- Bicol Small Business Institute Foundation
- BU Alumni Association, Inc.
- BU Student Volunteers
- BU Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff
- Blue Bell Foundation
- Compass Travel and Tours
- Convent of the Most Blessed Sacrament "Pink Sisters"
- D' clyn Dice
- Dominican Province of the Philippines, Inc.
- Drugmaker Laboratories Inc.
- Homeland Security Network, Bry. Mambog 5, Bacoor, Cavite
- Leviathan Fraternity and Leviathan Women's Circle – MLQU
- Makati Medical Center
- Mother Ignacia Ladies Dormitory (Residents)
- National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)
- Organization of Area Studies Majors, UP Manila-CAS
- Parkdale I Neighborhood Association, Inc.
- Philippine Airlines Foundation
- Philippine Navy – RMS Health Center
- Religious of the Virgin Mary Sisters
- Security and Exchange Commission Region V
- Sta. Elena College
- Sunshine International School
- S.M. Prieto Marketing, Inc.
- University of the Philippines-Los Baños
- UP Integrated School
- World Health Organization
- Atty. Maluh Castillo
- Dr. Christy Palacio
- Dr. Dax Cabredo
- Dr. Frederick Boholst
- Dr. Hassan Sergio
- Dr. Jan Carlo Baloloy
- Dr. Je Sean Ciocson
- Dr. Leonardo C. Lu
- Dr. Lily Mojica
- Dr. Marcelda N. Orbita
- Dr. Maria Rachel T. Santos Oca
- Dr. Marilyn Lacsa
- Dr. Nerissa N. Reyes
- Dr. Nestor T. Reyes
- Dr. Obdulia E. Rojas
- Dr. Ofelia S. Vega
- Dr. Rayner Baloloy
- Engr. Antonio Licup
- Engr. & Mrs. Guillermo
- Mr. Aaron Lozada
- Mr. Aldous Sta. Cruz
- Mr. Dionel Lovina
- Mr. Edwin Echaluce
- Mr. Francis Uy
- Mr. John Raymund Almeda
- Mr. Laurence Sanorjo
- Mr. Mark Jimenez
- Mr. Ramon Yazon
- Mr. Rodolfo Pallasigue
- Mr. Ryan Calderon
- Mr. Ryan Francis Deterala
- Mr. Timmy Guzman
- Mr. Virgilio Gerales
- Mrs. Cathy Prieto Sendin
- Ms. Arne Sarmiento
- Ms. Charm Sison
- Ms. Christen Joan Encisa
- Ms. Irma Angeles
- Ms. Jean Salalima
- Ms. Katherine Gadaingan
- Ms. Kristina Gadaingan
- Ms. Larah Baloloy
- Ms. Laura Pureza Lauraya
- Ms. Liza Escoto
- Ms. Lou Rodriguez
- Ms. Marianne Angeela Perea
- Ms. Marie Cris Chieng
- Ms. Menchu Sarmiento
- Ms. Myrna Valera
- Ms. Roda Faye Abat
- Ms. Shane Factor and friends in Lyceum College
- Ms. Sonia Peralta
- Ms. Sunshine Cacliong
- Prof. Sylvia Sustento
- Rev. Fr. Hermel O. Pama

Thank you so much, and may God continue to bless you more this 2007 and in the coming years.

(Sgd.) **SUSANA C. CABREDO**
SUC President IV

(PDI – February 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
CDC
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Please take notice that CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION willl be conducting a public hearing on **March 1, 2007, 10:00 a.m. OTSG Board Room, Building 2125, E. Quirino St., CSEZ, Pampanga**, in connection with the following Petitions filed by Clark International Airport Corporation.

1. Imposition of Security Fee of Php100.00 to all international passengers departing from the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA); and
2. Increase in DMIA Terminal Fee for Domestic Travelers from Php100.00 to Php150.00.

The Public is hereby invited to participate in the said hearing.

09 February 2007, CSEZ, Pampanga

(Sgd.) **LIBERATO P. LAUS**
President and CEO

(PDI - Feb. 15 & 22, 2007)

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QUEZON I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

QUEZELCO I is inviting interested suppliers to apply for accreditation and to bid for the supply of hereunder materials:

1.	**KWHM Bottom Connected** 10 (60) A, 240V, 60HZ, Electronic	5,800 pcs.
2.	**Socket Connected, Electronic** C1 100, 240V, 60HZ, 2 wire, 15 TA	200 pcs.
3.	**Meter Base C1 100, 1" HUB**	200 pcs.
4.	**Padlock Seal**	6,000 pcs.

Prospective bidders have to submit their updated company profile addressed to **Mr. Hermes Z. Avillo** BAC Chairman, QUEZELCO I, Brgy. Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon, Financial Standing of the suppliers will be evaluated as to the capability to accomplish the said undertaking.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders at the BAC secretariat.

The pre-qualification and bidding requirements and activities are as follows:

	Activities	Schedule
1	Accreditation/Pre-qualification of suppliers	February 15-20
2	Issuance of Bid documents	February 15-20
3	Pre-bid conference	February 21 01:00 PM
4	Opening and Evaluation of Bid	February 23 10:00 AM
5	Notice of Award	February 26
6	Bid Document	P5,000 Non-Refundable
7	Terms of payment of Bid Proposals	30 days / 6 months / 1 year

QUEZELCO I reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders.

For more information, please contact BAC secretariat at **Tel. No. (042) 318-8156.**

(Sgd.) **HERMES Z. AVILLO**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **DELIA V. VILLELA**
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI–February 14 & 15, 2007)

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ERRATUM

In the *NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S* of the **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT (DOLE-NCR)** published last January 26, 2007, **RAGA ONE2ONE** was inadvertently spelled RAGA ONEZONE.

Our apologies.

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Philippine Economic Zone Authority

Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan
Telephone (6347) 935-4004; 561-2451 Fax (6347) 935-6046

PEZA

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY – BATAAN ECONOMIC ZONE (PEZA-BEZ), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of (1) **Php 5,511,138.65 and (2) Php 4,006,729.10** being the **Approved Budget for the Contract** (ABC) to payments under the contract for the (1) **BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance and (2) Operations and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks and Sewerage Collection System for the Bataan Economic Zone** located at BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA-BEZ now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the above mentioned contracts as described below:

   Brief Description: Supply of Labor, Equipment and Supervision

   1. BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance

No. of Personnel/Workers	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
Thirty Eight (38)	One (1) calendar year	within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed

   2. Operation and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks & Sewerage Collection System

No. of Personnel/Workers	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
Twenty Five (25)	One (1) calendar year	within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed

   The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS (ITB).**
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass-fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform ACT," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, or to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights of privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZ and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from 13 to 19 February 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from the address below upon submission of a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** and a certified copy of their **G-EPS Registration Certificate and e-FPS enrollment** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos only (Php 1,000.00). The method of payment will be on a cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA-BEZ will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on February 26, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **1:30 P.M. of 12 March 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 55,111.38 (2) Php 40,067.29, Bank Guarantee in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 82,667.07, (2) Php 60,100.93; or in the form of Surety Bond in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 137,778.46 (2) Php 100,168.22.
8. Bid opening shall be on **12 March 2007 at 2:00 P.M.** at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA-BEZ reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority-BEZ
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
EMD Office, Ground Floor, BEZ
Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan
Tel. No. (047) 934-4008 / Fax No. (047) 935-6046
E-mail: bez_bac1@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) DIONISIO T. SAMEN
BEZ-BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) DANTE M. QUINDOZA
Zone Administrator

(PDI – February 8 & 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING/CONSULTATION

The Manila International Airport Authority will conduct a public hearing/consultation on March 2, 2007 at 2:00 PM regarding proposed adjustment of rental of its land and buildings located within the Airport Complex, as follows:

LOCATION/CATEGORY	PROPOSED RATE PER MONTH
1. General Aviation Area	
A. Land	
A.1 Developed	P 96.00/sq.m.
B.2 Undeveloped	72.00/sq.m.
B. Hangar	
B.1 Office	190.00 sq.m.
B.2 Hanger Proper	154.00 sq.m.
II. Other Areas	
A. Land located along Ninoy Aquino Ave., MIA Road, Domestic Road, Andrews Ave., Aurora Blvd., SLEX and the vicinity of Terminal Bldgs.	
A.1 Developed	132.00/sq.m.
A.2 Undeveloped	108.00/sq.m.
B. Land located on Areas not specified above	
B.1 Developed	P 112.00/sq.m.
B.2 Undeveloped	86.00/sq.m.
C. Building	
C.1 Steel/Concrete	313.00/sq.m.
C.2 Wooden/Light Materials	107.00/sq.m.
D. International Cargo Terminal	
D.1 Ground Floor - Airlines	300.00/sq.m.
- Commercial	400.00/sq.m.
- Storage/ Warehouse	150.00/sq.m.
D.2 Mezzanine - Airlines	
- Commercial	

The public hearing/consultation will be held at the Boardroom, 4/F, MIAA Administration, MIA Road, Pasay City.

The Authority invites the public to attend and participate in the public hearing/consultation.

For particulars, please inquire at the Business Development & Concessions Management Department at Tel. Nos. 832-2912, 877-1109 locs. 3071, 3709 & 3545.

(Sgd.) ALFONSO G. CUSI

(PDI – February 8 & 15, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
HYATT HOTEL & CASINO MANILA (NEW COAST HOTEL, INC.) 1588 Pedro Gil cor. M.H. del Pilar, Malate, Manila	Hung-Yi Wu	Director of Foods and Beverage
ROA SYSTEMS CO. LTD. – MANILA BRANCH 19/F, GT Tower International, 6813 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Katsuhiro Fujita	Project Manager
ROA SYSTEMS CO. LTD. – MANILA BRANCH 19/F, GT Tower International, 6813 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Naoaki Sashima	Chief System Engineer
ROA SYSTEMS CO. LTD. – MANILA BRANCH 19/F, GT Tower International, 6813 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Hayato Tsukuno	Chief System Engineer
DHANDWAL LENDING & TRADING CORP. Blk. 3 Lot 6 Zephyr Homes, F. Cruz St., Malibay, Pasay City	Surjeet Singh	Operation Manager
TELETECH CUSTOMER CARE MANAGEMENT PHILIPPINES INC. Bldg. F SM Corp. Offices, 1000 Bay Blvd., SM Central Bus. Park, Pasay City	Bong Un Sim	Executive Director, Operations
MISUGA KAIUN CO., LTD. 17/F Ramon Magsaysay Center, 1680 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Kenji Fujita	General Manager
MISUGA KAIUN CO., LTD. 17/F Ramon Magsaysay Center, 1680 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Omi Nakata	Manager
MISUGA KAIUN CO., LTD. 17/F Ramon Magsaysay Center, 1680 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Akiko Kato	Manager
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ 7/F JGC Phils. Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Shinzaburo Suzuki	Lead Piping Engineer
ISTANBUL EXPRESS CORPORATION Araneta Coliseum Circle, Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City	Rasim Gungor	Chef
PHILIPPINE BILLION STRONG MINERAL CORP. No. 50 Lapu Lapu Street, Magallanes Village, Makati City	Shui Shing Tung	Director
BANITA INTERNATIONAL CREDIT CORPORATION Cityland Condo, Unit 1042, Dela Rosa St., Pio del Pilar, Makati City	Chander Shekhar Mehan	Marketing Manager
PTT PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 32/F LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Vittaya Viboonterawud	Operations and Logistics Manager
SOPHIE MARTIN PHILS. INC. Unit 15 G/F EDSA Central Shopping Terminal, Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City	Guillaume Robert Ricard	General Manager
CZ PLASTICS MANUFACTURING CORP. 1138 Narra St., Tondo, Manila	Yali Zeng	Assistant Treasurer
OVERSEA MAPLE ONLINE CORPORATION Unit 704-705 Jocfer Bldg., Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City	Yung Il Kwon	President
TAS PLAN INC. 23/F Equitable Bank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Susumu Kawada	CAD Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–February 15, 2007)

OBITUARIES

Juan I. Pueblo

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on February 11, 2007 at the age of 81.

His bereaved children **Danny, Fe, Cora, Chi, Portia, Liza** and **Vic**; sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in San Isidro Labrador Parish Church, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 17, 2007 at the Jaen Cemetery after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. 712-3001 • 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
ATTY. REMIGIO D. SAGLES	Imperial Chapel Quezon City	February 18, 2007 after the 9:00 am Mass	Loyola Mem. Park Marikina City
CESAR M. GRIMARES	Chapel -2 Quezon City	February 15, 2007 9:00 am	Paz Crematory

---

> **"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."**
> Matthew 11:28

EMILIA HALILI GARCIA

May 28, 1925 - February 13, 2007

of Taal, Bocaue, Bulacan and Bustamante St., Caloocan City

Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 13, 2007 at the age of 81.

Her bereaved brother **Romy**; sisters **Nelia, Caridad, Pachotte** and in-laws **Clarita, Pepito, Edgardo**; nieces **Effie, Cynthia, Yollie**; nephew **Joselito** and niece-in-law **Baby**; grandchildren & great-grandchildren request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Sanctuarium (Chapel Freesia) at 739 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City for three (3) days from February 13-15, 2007 after which her remains will be transferred to the family residence in Taal, Bocaue, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 18, 2007 at the Garden of Peace Cemetery after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the San Pedro De Alcantara Church in Taal, Bocaue, Bulacan.

Death Notice

MA. PAZ E. REMO

(Mother, Teacher)
of Goa, Camarines Sur

passed away on February 9, 2007 at the age of 65.

Her body lies in state at their residence on L. Pan St., Goa, Camarines Sur.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 16, 2007 at the Goa Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Goa Catholic Church.

Leticia "Baybee D." Reyes Dionisio

She went home to her Creator
on February 12, 2007.

> *"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimpy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on the rock and gave me a firm place to stand."*
> **Psalm 40:1-2**

Her caring daughter **Ernestina D. Magboo**; her father **Saturnino Dionisio**; brothers **Federico (†), Joselito, Cesar, & Rolando**; sisters **Erlinda D. Balingcongan & Nelia D. Santiago**; in-laws, nieces & nephews request her relatives and friends to pray with them in thankful celebration of her life as a wonderful mother and friend.

Her ashes remain at the Capilla de la Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio Church, Forbes Park, McKinley Road, City of Makati.

Inurnment will be on Saturday, February 17, 2007 in the afternoon.

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Department of Agrarian Reform
A20

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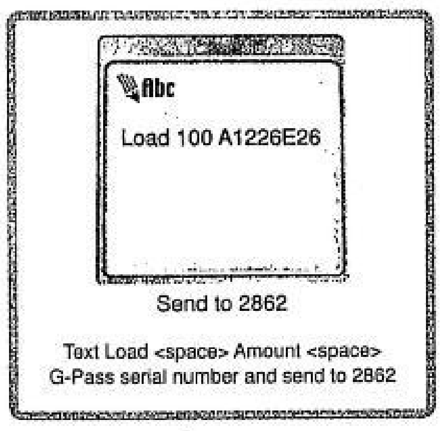

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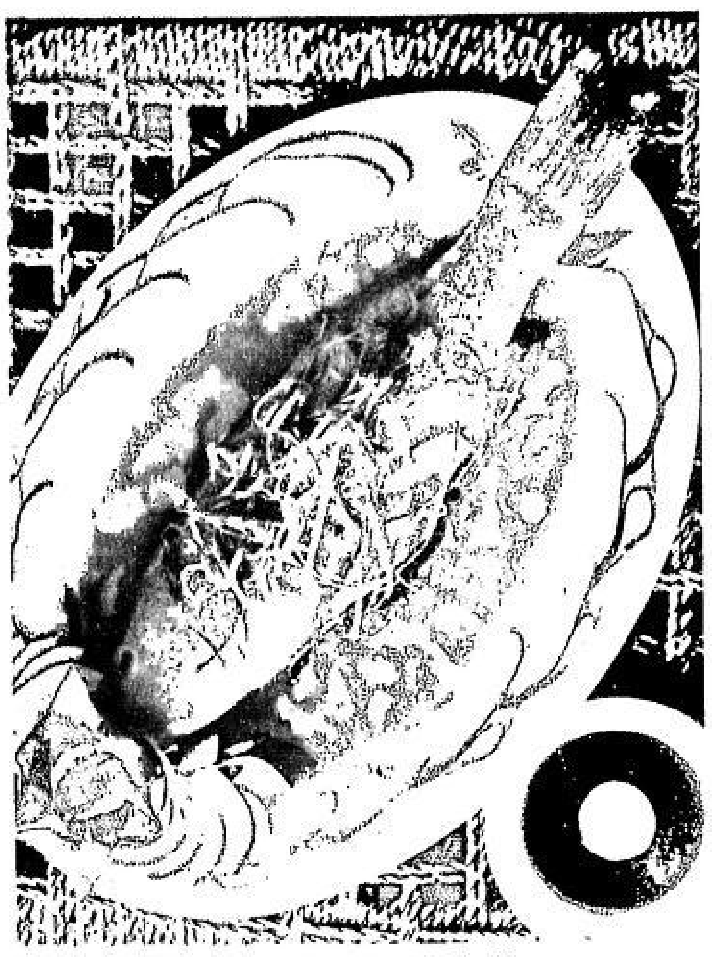
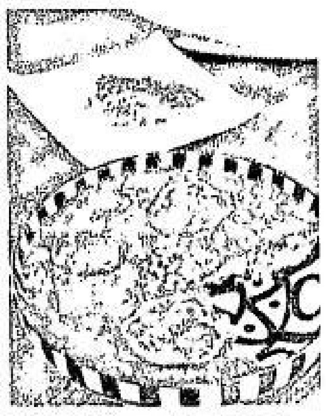
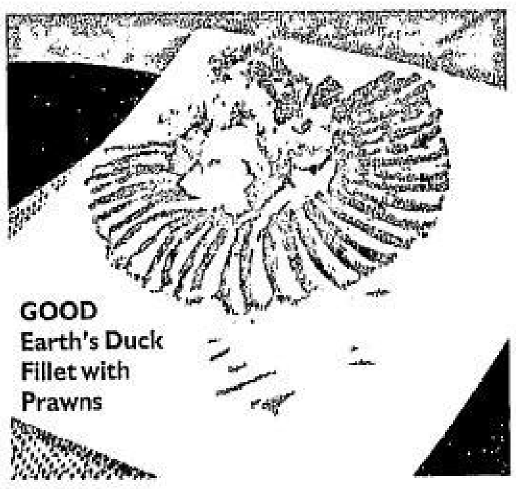
WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD


STEAMED Red Lapu-Lapu from David's Tea House

HIGHLANDS China Palace's Braised Whole Calmex Abalone


HONG Kong-style baked chicken from Mandarin Wok


GOOD Earth's Duck Fillet with Prawns

Welcome the new year by the bay

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN mind as the Chinese New Year approaches: Dumplings bring closer ties within the family. Chicken symbolizes wholeness and prosperity. Fish means abundance for the coming year. Melons are a symbol of family unity, as they hold out the wish that the family will, like the moon, stay round, large and whole. Prawns represent laughter. Oranges stand for wealth and prosperity.

Plan a sumptuous—and auspicious—dinner with friends and family and celebrate the Year of the Pig at the SM Mall of Asia's Chinese restaurants. Mann Hann, Mandarin Wok, David's Tea House, Good Earth Restaurant and Highlands China Palace have prepared special dishes for good beginnings.

Mann Hann Restaurant, which is located at the Arcade of the North Building, recommends a serving of Chami noodles and soup. Noodles, after all, are a symbol of long life, and Mann Hann's homemade wheat *chami* noodles are served with pork, *kikiam*, mushrooms, fish balls and assorted vegetables.

Mandarin Wok, which serves a variety of Chinese dishes, suggests Szechuan Eggplant in a pot with ground pork and chili sauce; and Baked Chicken Hong Kong Style.

David's Tea House, which is known for its modern Chinese restaurant ambiance, has an assorted dim sum selection. It is believed that dumplings—*hakaw*, shrimp *siomai*, beef balls, four seasons scallop, and shark's fin—bring "closer ties, warmer affection and prosperity within the family"; while fried spring rolls, which resemble gold or silver bullion, symbolize wealth.

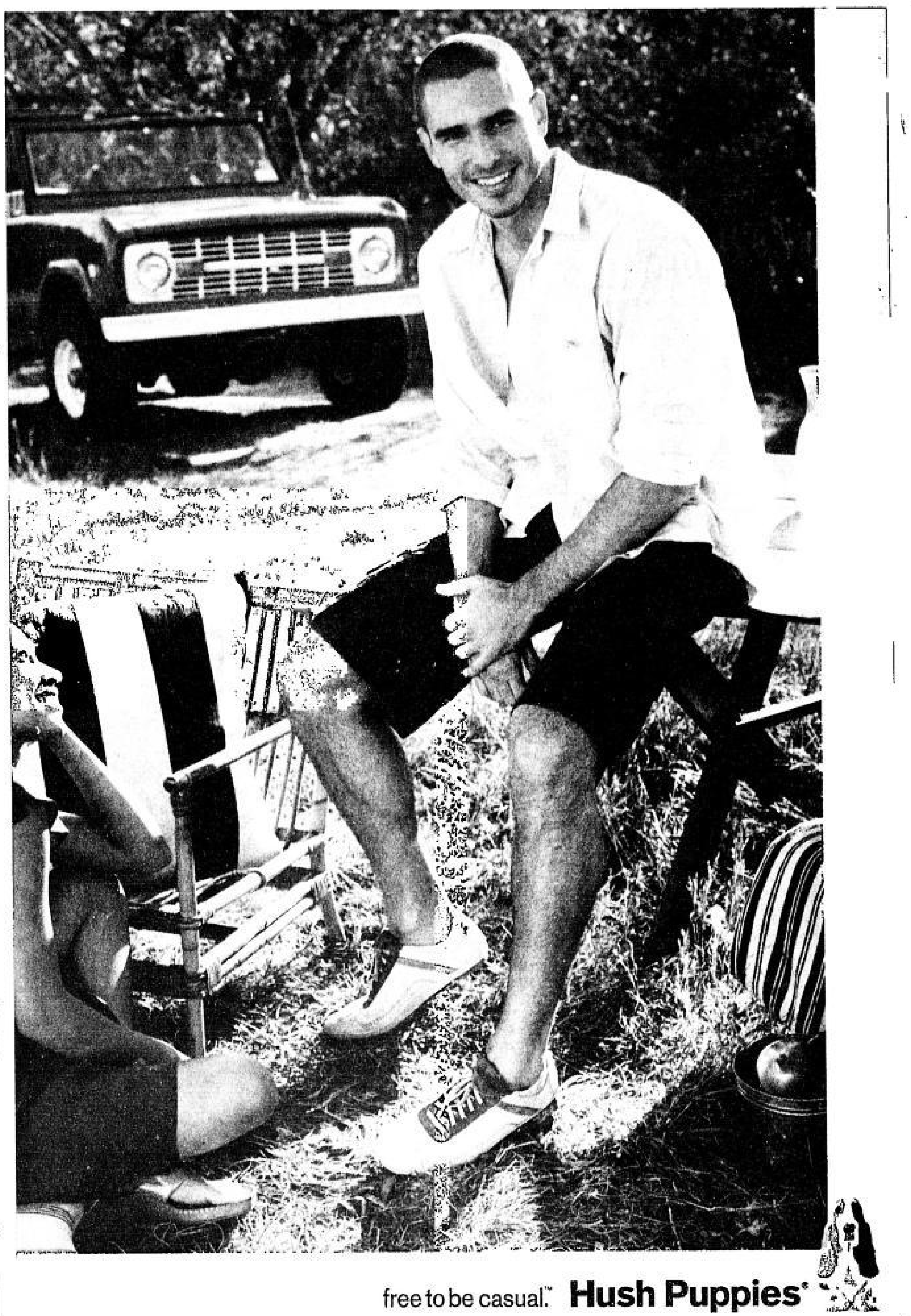
Located at the South Arcade of the Mall of Asia, David's Tea House also suggests Steamed Red Lapu-Lapu, Golden Seafood Roll, Sizzling Squid with Black Bean Sauce and Sliced Beef Broccoli.

Good Earth Restaurant recommends Duck Fillet with Prawns, as duck symbolizes fidelity, and Steamed Pampano with Rice.

Highlands China Palace brings the specialties from its Tagaytay Highlands Restaurant to the mall. It offers Three Way Peking Duck; Braised Whole Calmex Abalone with rich oyster sauce; and Stuffed Wintermelon Rings with Prawns steamed to perfection with crab roe.

SM Mall of Asia is open 10 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Sunday.

HIGHLANDS China Palace's Peking Duck good for a family of 8-10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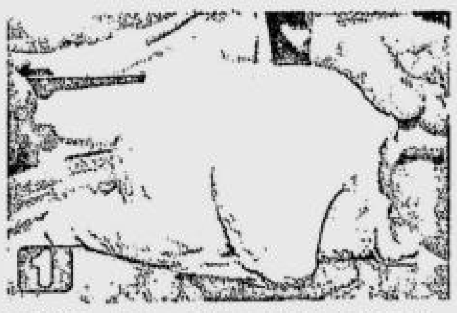
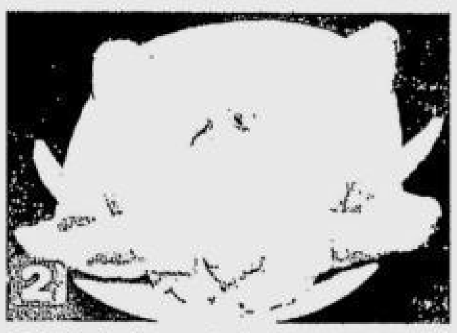
Chicken's eight treasures for Year of the Pig


1

RINSE and dry chicken. With a cleaver, cut off head, neck and bottom. With a sharp boning or paring knife, cut through skin along backbone. Peel skin back a little on one side, cutting away meat from bones. When hip and shoulder joints are exposed, twist or cut them away from carcass, being careful not to tear skin.


2

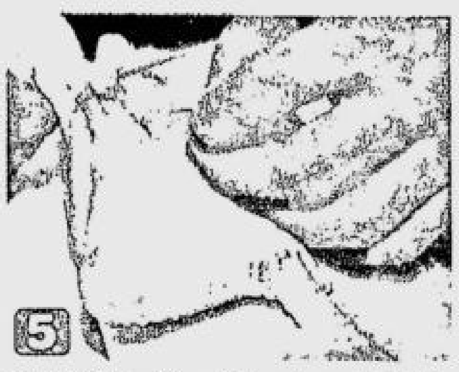
LEAVE the legs and wings intact and concentrate on cutting the breast free from breastbone. Repeat on other side, then lift carcass away from skin, carefully cutting skin free from ridge of breastbone. Place chicken breast side down on a plate. Set aside.

3

PREPARE the stuffing. In a wok with little water, cook together bamboo shoots, lotus seeds, fungus and ham. Let it simmer for a while. Drain and set aside. Using the same wok, heat oil and stir-fry dried shrimps and scallops. Drain. In a plate combine together all cooked ingredients.

4

IN another wok with water, briskly cook sticky rice. Drain. Using the same wok, combine rice with the cooked ingredients and add chicken powder, oyster sauce and mushroom sauce. Mix well. Add sesame oil. Transfer mixture to a plate.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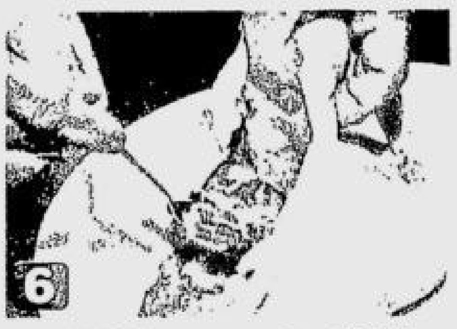
THE NECK of the chicken is sealed with a barbecue stick.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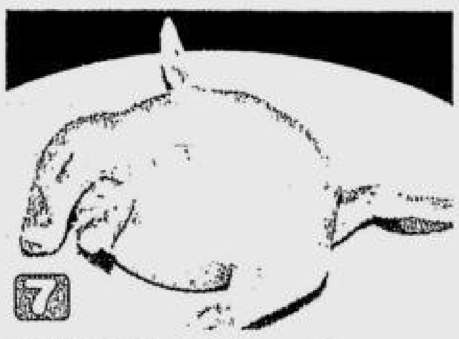
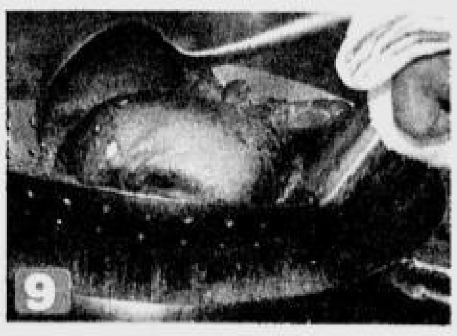
THROUGH the rear opening, fill chicken with rice mixture.


7

SECURE with a barbecue stick.

8

FOR a golden color, heat white sugar with a little water until it becomes golden brown and pour mixture onto the chicken.


9

DEEP-FRY chicken for 30 seconds or until golden brown. Drain and quickly wash chicken with hot water to remove excess oil. Transfer to a bowl.

10

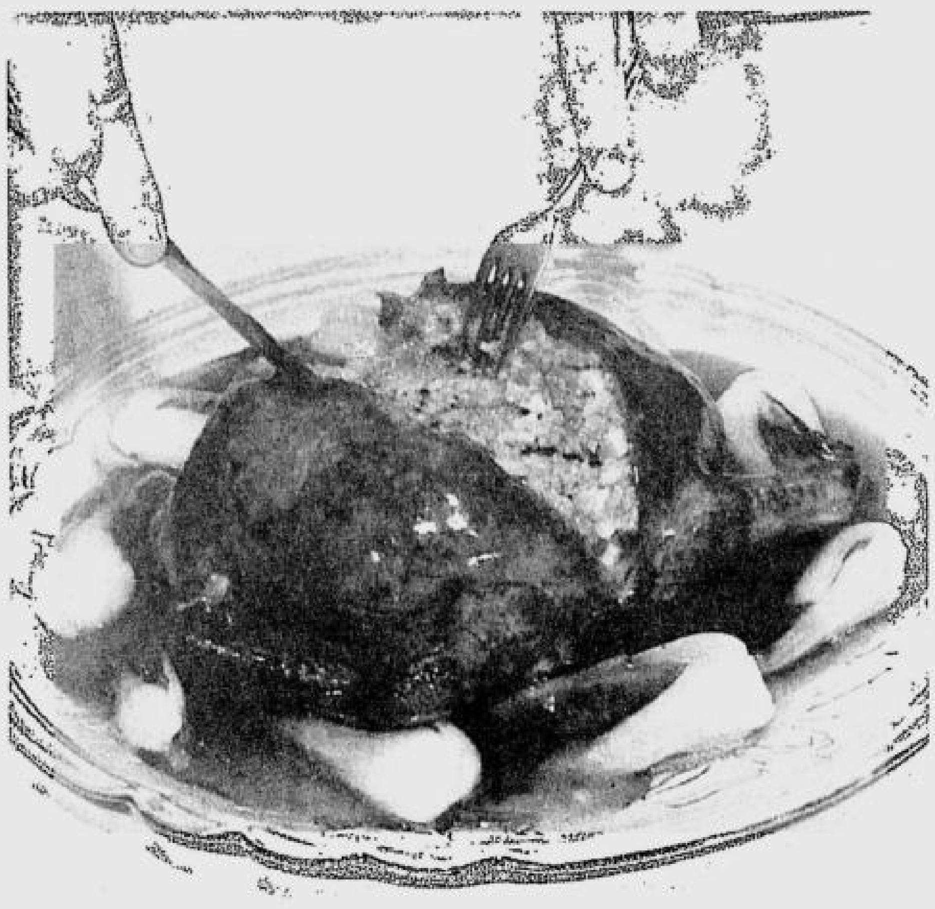
SAUTÉ leek and ginger. Add chicken stock, sugar and salt to taste. Then, transfer sauce onto the chicken bowl and add bay leaf, star anise and cinnamon stick.

11

STEAM in bowl for 45 minutes.

12

DRAIN chicken and set aside sauce. Remove barbecue sticks. Transfer chicken to a serving dish with blanched Chinese *pechay*. Cook sauce in a wok and thicken it with a little cornstarch. Pour on top of the chicken.


TO SERVE Eight Treasure Chicken, cut skin open with four crossing cuts, cutting down through skin into stuffing.

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

DURING THE CELEBRATION OF Chinese New Year, food is more than just food. Almost every dish is symbolic, as are its ingredients. The Chinese believe food directly affects one's fortune in the coming year.

Most Chinese families fill their dining tables with lots of food to assure prosperity and abundance throughout the year. Each dish chosen promises luck, long life and happiness.

One dish considered lucky and traditionally prepared by the Chinese during the New Year is the Eight-Treasure Chicken (Pat Po Kwe). It is made with whole chicken. Though some use duck, chicken is more acceptable and readily available.

In Chinese, duck represents fidelity while chicken symbolizes a good marriage and the coming together of families (a whole chicken emphasizes family unity).

The chicken is deboned. Though removing the bone is not difficult, it takes time, especially if someone is doing it for the first time. Also difficult to do, especially for beginners, is tying up in the chicken in a bundle after stuffing it. The hole where the stuffing is inserted can be closed with thread or barbecue sticks.

This dish is quite filling because the stuffing is a blend of such ingredients as sticky rice, dried shredded scallops, minced Chinese ham, dried shrimps, lotus seeds and other spices. Sticky rice is also auspicious in Chinese cuisine as grains sticking together when cooked also symbolize family unity. Lotus seeds are a symbol for fertility.

STEP BY STEP

A combination of different sauces gives this recipe flavor and richness.

Most of the ingredients are available in major supermarkets and Chinese stores in Binondo.

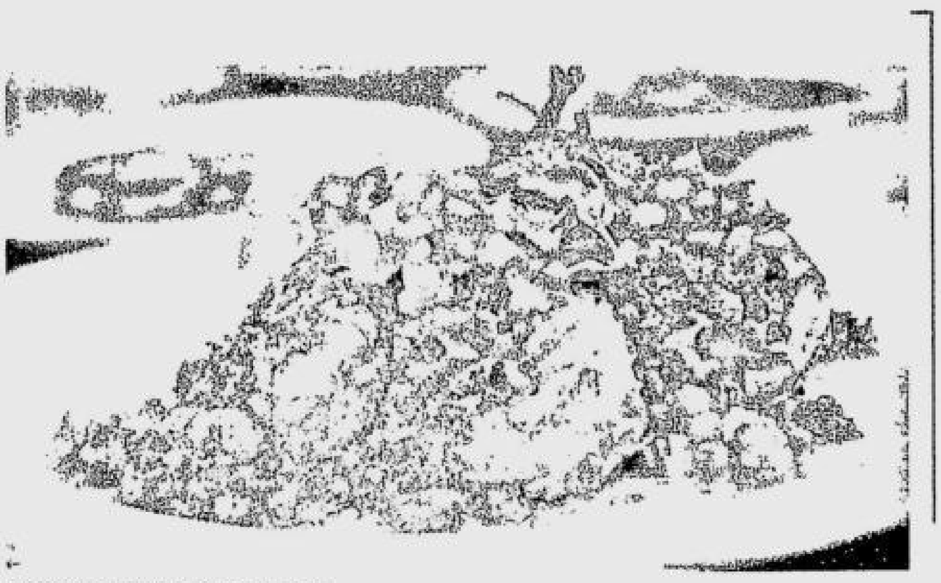
Eight-Treasure Chicken, demonstrated by Chinese chef Danny Ho, is one of the bestsellers at Peking Garden, 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (tel. 8179066/67). Peking Garden is an affiliate of Maxim's Hong Kong.

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

Ingredients:
1.2 kg fresh chicken
30 g dried bamboo shoots, blanched, chopped
40 g dried black mushroom, soaked in water for 2 hours, drained, chopped
30 g Chinese preserved sausage, steamed, chopped
30 g dried scallops, dipped in water, shredded
50 g dried lotus seeds, soaked in water, steamed
25 g Chinese Yunan ham, steamed
30 g dried shrimp (*hibi*), soaked in hot water, drained
10 g black fungus, soaked in hot water
100 g sticky rice, steamed
1 tsp chicken powder
2 tbsp oyster sauce
1 tbsp mushroom sauce
1 tbsp sesame oil
Marinade:
Bay leaf
Star anise
Cinnamon sticks
Ginger, sliced
Onion leeks
Chicken stock

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Promoting our own cooking


GUINATAANG Hipon Relova

AMY BESA HAD A HECTIC schedule in town promoting "Memories of Philippine Kitchens," a book she authored with her husband Romy Dorotan. Romy was here for the first leg but had to leave. Someone had to cook, after all, at Cendrillon, their restaurant in New York.

Amy's schedule included book launches, talks on Filipino cooking, family eating events, out-of-town sorties and class reunions.

The first one I attended was a sort of school reunion. Her Maryknoll classmates took charge of the launch at A Different Bookstore in Serendra, Taguig. While Amy signed books, guests tasted some of the food featured in the book.

I was drawn to the *ube pan de sal* with *adobo* flakes as sandwich filling. The *ube* gave added texture and color to the bread, though not that much in taste.

Romy told me during our last interview that he's fascinated with *ube* because he hadn't seen other Asian countries cook with it. He has used *ube* in crostini and pizza crust.

What surprised me was how great *lumpiang* Shanghai went with a pineapple sweet-and-sour sauce. It's a variation of the usual sauce served with fried spring roll but the bits of pineapple make it so distinct and different and extra delicious.

In the book, the *lumpia* was done by Romy's brother, Danny, who helps out a few days a week at the restaurant.

I was late for Amy's speaking appointment at the Enderun Colleges (Ortigas Center), a hotel and restaurant school offering bachelor degrees in management and culinary arts. With Amy were Neal Oshima, the book's photographer, and chef Ed Quimson of Filos restaurant.

ENDERUN'S culinary head, chef See Cheong Yan, demonstrates two recipes with Amy Besa annotating.

Power of observation

The three talked of Filipino food and the making of the book. One information relevant to students was how Romy became a chef. Amy said he didn't take the culinary-school route. He was working as dishwasher and kitchen helper when he was suddenly thrust into cooking when the cook suddenly left with his staff. Apparently, just observing the work being done daily was enough for him to learn enough to take over.

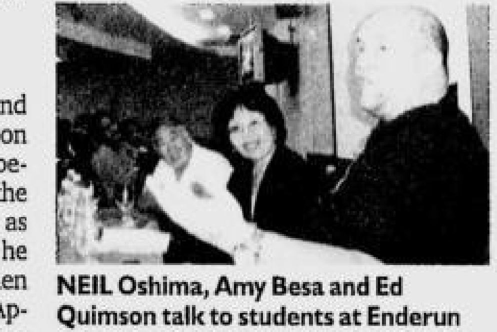
After the talk, we repaired to the school's kitchen for some cooking lessons.

Malaysian chef See Cheong Yan, the school's culinary head, was going to do two recipes that day—Nyonya Laksa and the Guinataan Hipon Relova featured in the book.

As both dishes use coconut milk, the chef decided to get the milk from scratch—cracking the mature coconut, scraping the meat using a *kudkuran* (coconut scraper) then squeezing to extract the cream and milk.

The main flavor of the *laksa* came from the *dilis* (dried anchovies) and chicken stock simmered for one hour. The rest of the ingredients added even more flavors—curry paste, lemon grass, chili, *galangal* shrimp paste, curry, cinnamon bark, cloves, star anise, ginger and cilantro. The *laksa* was such a rich mix—spicy, thick filling. We sampled it at the lunch after class.

The *guinataang hipon* was such a revelation. Most of us would think it's done the usual way, shrimp cooked in coconut milk and then finished with coconut cream. But for this, the coconut milk was cooked first to get the oil and the *latik* (coco bits).


NEIL Oshima, Amy Besa and Ed Quimson talk to students at Enderun Colleges.

When the *latik* turned golden, the shrimp was added. *Kamias* gave the sour flavor. It also told us that this was not dessert but a main dish. It was rich in its own way—creamy, browned, glazed—taken with coconut rice and a salad of chopped tomatoes and mangoes.

In the book, Amy wrote how equally surprised she was about the process. It's a recipe of Loreto del Mundo Relova of Pila, Laguna, who shared her other dishes for the book—*pata estofado, leche flan* and *buko* pie.

Lunch was at Restaurant 101, the school's service outlet that chef See said "gives our students a dose of reality." Apart from the *laksa* and *guinataang hipon*, a salad of *adobong* duck with portobello mushroom and dessert of caramelized banana in phyllo pastry were served. They were served with wines, each one compatible with the dishes.

On her last evening, Amy was guest at the International Wine and Food Society dinner at Restaurant 9501. She shuttled from her table to a space within the restaurant for interviews with two television cable channels, part of her book promotion.

Greatest influence

When she was called to give a short talk, she acknowledged Doreen Gamboa Fernandez as the person who most influenced her and Romy in their quest to inform the world about Filipino food.

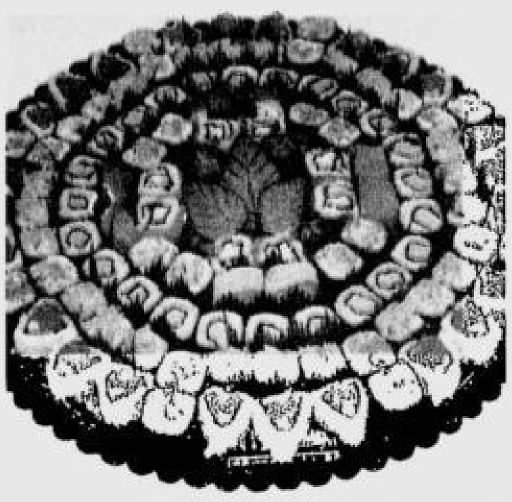
Amy and Romy have been doing that for years at Cendrillon and now with their book. They have connected with influential food writers in the United States such as Peter Kaminsky, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Raymond Sokolov who wrote the foreword, afterword and introduction, respectively.

Sokolov, in his book "Why We Eat What We Eat," wrote how "...Filipinos, isolated from one another by their many local languages and their island geography, are just beginning to learn about [their cooking] in their multifarious totality."

"Memories of Philippine Kitchens" helps with the learning experience indeed for Filipinos who are discovering their own cuisine beyond their own town, province and region.

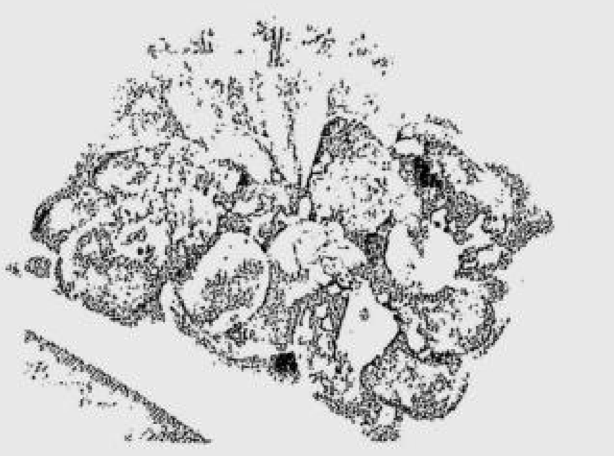
E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

SOFITEL'S Spareribs Cantonese style



KITARO'S ALL MAKI PARTY TRAY
The All Maki Party Tray consists of 112 pieces of round-shaped maki-tekka, California, kani, tuna, crunchy, tamago, kappa and rainbow—which is good for 12-15 health-conscious individuals—for only P1,453. Call delivery 9111115.

NEW FOR THE NEW YEAR
Cravings new menu for 2007 features some additions like Gambas, Vietnamese Spring Rolls, Chicken Tenders, Pan-seared Hungarian Sausages and Bell Peppers with Sausage Skillet (right), specialty Porterhouse Steak, Oriental Beef, and Roastbeef with Mushroom Sauce. Other new additions are Surf and Turf, Lengua a la Costa Brava. Cravings restaurant (tel. 4266681/4266567, Katipunan; 6356087/88, Shangri-La Plaza Mall; 8154269/71, Fraser Place, Makati; 4269736, Tomas Morato; and 8504437, Festival Mall, Alabang) offers catering services and has function rooms for different occasions.



DINING OUT

3-day new year feast

SOFITEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA Manila's (tel. 5515555) Spiral restaurant welcomes the Year of the Pig with a three-day Chinese celebration Feb. 16-18. On Feb. 16, there will be the Great China Buffet of the Sunset barbecue (P1,388+ per person). Cantonese chef Siu Man Yeung has a banquet of traditional Chinese New Year dishes from different regions of China. Dragon and Lion dance will be featured Feb. 16 and 18.

THE RENAISSANCE Makati City Hotel (tel. 8116888) welcomes the New Year with special Chinese dishes prepared by Chinese executive chef Jackie Fong. The New Year dishes are called The Prosperity Future and the Long Life Dragon, good for a minimum of 10 persons, available for lunch and dinner Feb 17-March 4.

PEKING Garden Chinese Restaurant (tel. 8179066/9067) offers two special set menus for its Lucky Meals of Fortune. The premium set menu consists of five kinds of appetizer at P25,888+/12 persons. The deluxe edition is priced at P11,888+/12 persons. Also available are special *tikoy*—golden at P318/box and premium at P298/box—in colorful packages. An affiliate of Peking Garden Hong Kong, the restaurant is open daily for lunch and dinner. It is at 2/L Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's Peony Garden (tel. 5261212 loc. 2503 or 2296) offers authentic Malaysian-Cantonese flavors including such dishes as Braised Abalone with Mushrooms, Steamed Lapu-Lapu Chuo Chow Style, Stuffed Taro Suckling Pig, Sha Pho Seafood Shark's Fin. The Xin Nian Kuai Leh offer runs until Feb. 18.

INTERCONTINENTAL'S (tel. 8159711) Café Jeepney welcomes the Year of the Boar with a buffet spread of popular "Chinoy" dishes for lunch and dinner Feb. 15-20. Dishes include Pata Tim, Hototay Soup, Ampalaya con Carne, Lumpia Shanghai, Pancit Canton, Pinsit, Camaron Rebosado, Sago with Almond Jelly.

THE PENINSULA MANILA'S Nielsen's Restaurant (tel. 8872888 loc. 6742 or 6745) offers Chinese New Year Sunday Brunch Buffet Feb. 18, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., P1,088+ (adult) and P588+ (children).

THE HERITAGE HOTEL Manila's Restaurant Riviera (tel. 8548888) offers Lo Hei Fortune Buffet lunch/dinner for only P988 per person Feb. 18-March 4. Chinese dishes include Tsong Tsai Tong (mini pot soup) Tsong Tsai Fan (special mini pot rice with Chinese sausage), and Ho Xi Fatt Choy (Braised Dried Oyster with Black Moss and Vegetable) among others.

YANG TZE Restaurant located in Mount Sea Grand Resort in Tanza, Cavite, offers authentic Chinese cuisine. Dishes include Beef Brisket, Fish Fillet with Fresh Asparagus, and Chicken Mango Roll. Yang Tze's bestseller is the tasty Fried Pig Entrail (Quekiam-style) served with a special spicy sauce. Call 3010530 loc. 286-290 (Manila office) or e-mail info@mountsearesorts.com.

CORAL Garden's Crispy Bean Curd (left) and Crab

CORAL Garden has opened its second outlet on E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue in the Libis area. The restaurant specializes in Guangdong cooking. This cuisine emphasizes seafood and unique mixed flavorings. The new branch offers the same authentic Chinese dishes served in the original outlet. They include Crispy Bean Curd with sauce, Coral Supreme Soup made from fried fresh milk and crab meat, Sizzling Spare Ribs and Coral Chicken.

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TOP CULINARY SCHOOL - PHILIPPINE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2006

FEBRUARY - MARCH SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

COOKING CLASSES

February 16, Friday - BASIC SUSHI AND SASHIMI WORKSHOP 1. Chef Gene will teach us the basic of sushi and sashimi making in this workshop. He will demonstrate How to Trim Tuna, How to make Sushi Rice, Tekka Don, California Rolls, Lap lapu Uzusukuri, Ponzu Sauce, Tekka Temaki and Kani Sarada Temaki. The recipes include all ingredients for P1,800.00 from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m.

February 18, Sunday - AN INDIAN DINNER. Chef Jenny Tan our Halal teacher will be demonstrating delec[illegible] adapted for the home kitchen that everyone will enjoy. Recipes include Eggplant Bhajia w/ Tamarind and Ginger Chu[illegible] Chicken Curry Soup, Lamb and Apple Curry, Fish Molee, Raita, Mango Chutney and Kheer for P1,500.00 includin[illegible] ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

February 26, Monday - SIMPLE INDOOR BBQ IDEAS. Simple barbecue ideas from Chef Toto Erfe of Cafe Ysabel ki[illegible] will be demonstrated. The recipes are 5-Spice Pork Ribs, Provolone Beef Burgers with Bloody Mary Sauce, Lemongra[illegible] & Kaffir Pork Chops with Chili-Lime Sauce, Curried Chicken BBQ with Tamarind Glaze, Blackened Fish Fillet with Red Onion and Pepper Salsa & Stuffed Sausage Kebabs. The recipes include all ingredients for P1,800.00 from 10:00 [illegible] p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 01, Thursday - EASY EVERYDAY SPANISH MEALS FOR THE HOME. From the Kitchen of Chef Betin[illegible] here are easy to prepare Spanish meals for the home that the whole family will enjoy. The recipes are Catalan Caulifo[illegible] Salad (Ensalada de Coulifor ala Catalan), Lentil and Lima Beans with Chorizo Sofrito (Lentejas con Lima), Betina's Mixed Seafood Stew with Garlic Sauce (Suquet de Pescado con Allioli), Spicy Porkloin with Caramelized Onion (Cerdo Picante con Cebol Caramelizada), Paella Vegetarian (Paella de Legumbres) and Festival Salad of Colors (Ensalada de Fruta [illegible] P1,850.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m including all ingredients NEW CLASS.

March 02, Friday - PIZZA & PASTA WORKSHOP. Café Ysabel Chef. Chef Toto Erfe will be teaching us basic p[illegible] and p[illegible] dough with sauces that can be used on pizza and on pasta at the same time. Recipes include Sausages and Caramelized O[illegible] Pesto-Tomato with Peppered Shrimp Sauce, Bacon and Cheeseburger Sauce, Truffle Scented Three Mushr[illegible] Pepperoni, Salami and Roasted Pepper Sauce and Classic Puttanesca Sauce. The fee of P1,800.00 includes all ingr[illegible] 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

March 09, Friday - EASY TO DO APPETIZERS 2. Another set of Appetizers from Chef Toto Erfe will be demonstrated in [illegible] class. The easy to do recipes are Salpicao, Baked Clams, Marinated Mushrooms, Ceviche, Nilasing na Hipon, Fr[illegible] Mushroom and Korean Octopus for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m NEW CLASS.

March 14, Wednesday - CIAO MANILA! Simple, Economical, Healthy Pasta Recipes from Chef Lawrence Zafi[illegible] of Ca[illegible] Ysabel that are in time for the coming season, Holy Week. The recipes are Linguini con Salsa di Spinaci (Linguine with Spinach), Spaghetti alla Norma (Spaghetti with Eggplant and Tomato), Spaghetti alla Puttanesca (Whore's Spaghetti), Penne Cavolfiore (Penne with Cauliflower), Peperoni Ripieni di Pasta (Sweet Bell Peppers Stuffed with Pasta), Fettucini con La Zuc[illegible] (Fettucini with Pumpkin Sauce), Spaghetti al Tonno e Limone (Spaghetti with Tuna and Lemon) and Spaghetti alla Bologne[illegible] (Spaghetti with Bolognese Sauce) for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 18, Sunday - GOURMET BURGERS. Burgers are fun to eat. Don't stop at traditional beef burgers. So impre[illegible] your friends and take your burgers to a new culinary level! Teriyaki Burger with Wasabi Butter, Spiced Lamb Burger with Cucumb[illegible] Mint Sauce, Gourmet Beef Burger with Mustard Butter, Chicken Satay Burger with Peanut Sauce and Spicy Cucumber Salad and lastly Crab Burgers with Mango Salsa are the new recipes from Chef Jenny Tan that includes all ingredients for P1,500.00 from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 19, Monday - SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 3. Buffalo Wings, Breaded Calamari with Cocktail Sauce, Gruyere a[illegible] Bacon Souffle, Herbed Tuna Casserole, Roasted Gourmet Chicken and Mocha Mud Pie are the recipes from Chef Gin[illegible] All recipes include all ingredients for P1,500.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m

March 21, Wednesday - SUMPTUOUS SALMON 1. Let Chef Gino teach you 6 unique and tasty ways to cook Salmon that c[illegible] be used in catering or for entertaining. Recipes include Salmon Cannelloni, Salmon Croquettes with Dill-Mustard Sauce, Herb Crusted Salmon Fillet with Caper Buerre Blanc, Spinach Salmon Lasagna with Saffron Gratin, Salmon Mousse with Fish Roe Horseradish Sauce and Poached Salmon Paupiette with Lemon-Basil Whisk Butter Sauce for P1,800.00 includin[illegible] ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m

March 22, Thursday - SOME OF MY FAVORITE SEMANA SANTA RECIPES. Family owned Holy Week recip[illegible] Chef Betina Legarda will be demonstrated. The recipes are Ensalada Murciana (Refreshing Seafood Salad), Cazuela de Fide[illegible] a la Malagueña (Malaga Style Noodles with Clams), Bonito con Aceitunas y Al Caparas (Tuna with Olives and Capers), Bacal[illegible] Monacal (Baked Monastery Fish), Malagueña Paella de Mariscos (Rice with Seafood) and Fillons de Mexilon (Crea[illegible] Mussel Stuffed Crepes). All ingredients included for P1,850.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 23, Friday - SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 4. Chef Gino is meant to put a smile on every person seated on the tab[illegible] for all the recipes he will be sharing with us. Recipes include Cream of Spinach Soup; Corn, Asparagus and Green Salad; Fi[illegible] fillet al Caparas; Meatloaf with Pan Gravy and Pannacotta with Honey for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - [illegible] p.m

March 25, Sunday - ALL ABOUT CHICKEN. Calling all chicken lovers!!! This is the family-pleasing chicken recipes from Chef Jenny Tan that you have been waiting for from appetizers to salad to maindish. The recipes are Chicken Quesadillas, Waldorf Chicken Salad, Chicken and Pasta Chowder, Chicken Kiev, Saucy Chicken with Peaches and Pineapple and Chicken Rice for P1,500.00 from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 31, Saturday - IMPRESS-YOU-GUEST APPETIZERS. Learn how to make easy to do appetizers that will impre[illegible] your guests and liven up your party… Chef Jenny Tan will teach us the following recipes Shrimp and Fish Ceviche, Marinated Crab on Lettuce, Mini Vegetable Pie, Spicy Tuna Tartare on Frico, Rosti with Tuna and Salsa Verde, Quesadillas with Black Bean Salsa, Quail Eggs with Spiced Salt in a Nest and Melon Soup. From 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,500.00 including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.

BAKING CLASSES

February 20, Tuesday - HOME BREAD BAKING. Learn the secrets of making really great bread from Australian Master Baker Mike Rossiter. Recipes are specially designed for home baking and cover making White Bread, Pan De Sal, Francis Ro[illegible] and Cinnamon Raisin Bread. One on one instruction ensures success. Recipes include all ingredients. P1,200.00 from 10:[illegible] 4:00 p.m

February 21, Wednesday - MORE BREAD BAKING. Australian Master Baker Mike Rossiter with more great bread recip[illegible] Learn how to make successful bread recipes at home. In this class you learn how to make French Baguettes, Whole Wh[illegible] Bread, Walnut & Sultana Bread and Crusty Vienna Bread. One on one instruction. Recipes include all ingredients P1,[illegible]00.00 from 10:00am - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

February 22, Thursday - CROISSANTS & DANISH PASTRIES. Learn the secrets of making delicious Croissants and mouth watering Danish Pastries. Individual teaching by Australian Master Baker Mike Rossiter ensures you learn the secrets of success every time! All recipes are designed for home baking. One on one instruction. Recipes include all ingredients P1,200.00 from 10:0am - 4:00 p.m.

February 23, Friday - CINNAMON ROLLS & SCONES. Learn the secrets of making delicious Cinnamon bakery products from Australian Master Baker Mike Rossiter. Recipes are designed for home baking and show you how to make mouth watering Cinnamon Rolls as well as delicious Scones Traditional and, Whole Wheat varieties One on one instruction ensures succes[illegible] Recipes include all ingredients. P1,200.00 from 10:am - 4:00 p.m NEW CLASS.

February 28, Wednesday - PUFF PASTRIES. Master Baker from Australia Mike Rossiter teaches the secrets of making delicious flaky puff pastry at home. Learn how to laminate puff pastry to make mouth watering Apple Turnovers, Vanilla Slices, Vol-au-Vent and Butter Twists. One on one instruction. Recipes include all ingredients. P1,200.00 from 10:00am- 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

March 15, Thursday - CHOCOLATE TEMPTATIONS. This class is a must for anyone with a passion to create a dazzling chocolate desserts. Chef Aduree Chong-Uy will demonstrate a variety of specialties like Double Chocolate Rum Cake, Fudgy Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Blitz Torte, Flourless Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Peanut Butter Dome and Graham Chocolate Roulade for P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.

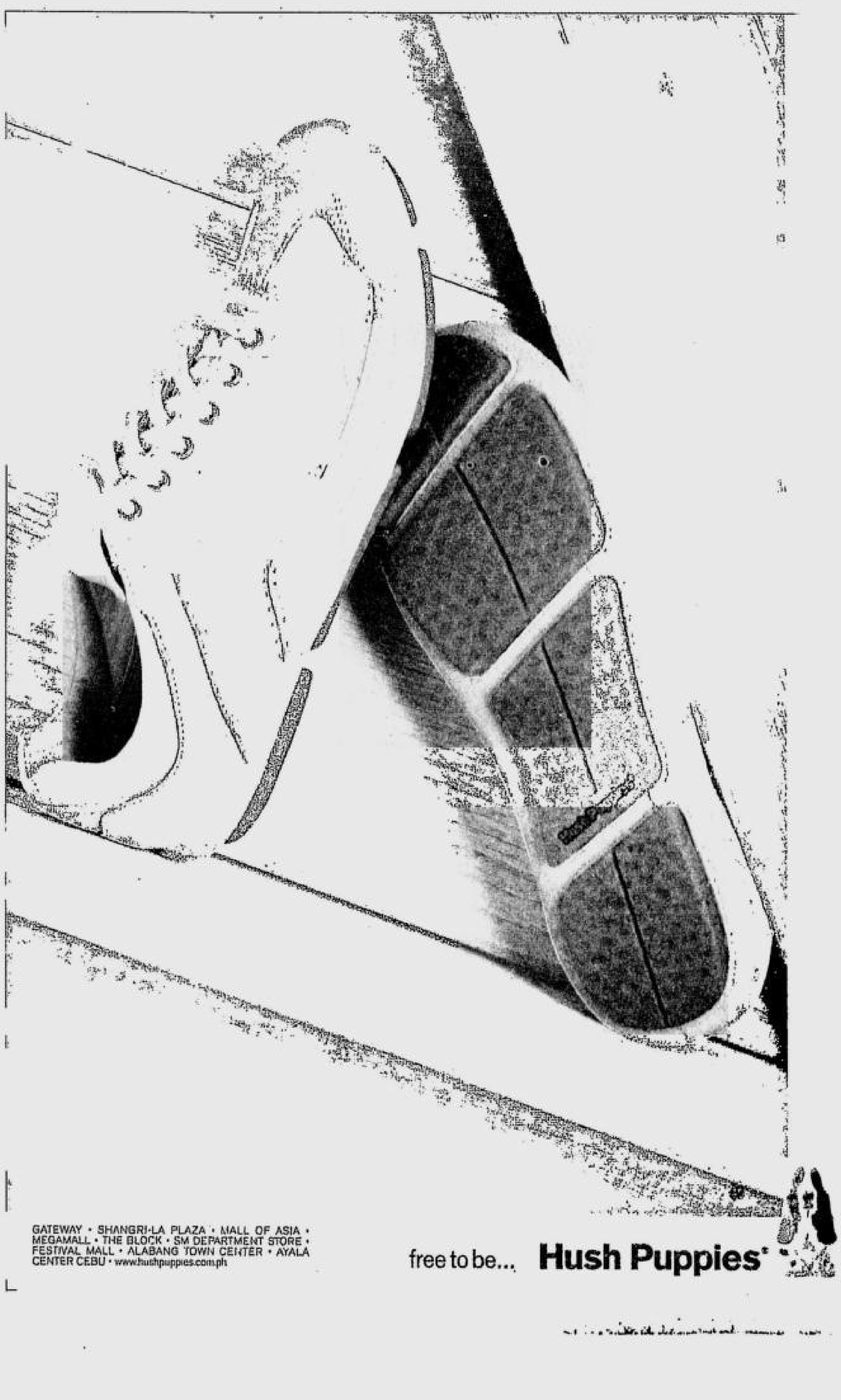
March 30, Friday - COOKIE AND BROWNIE WORKSHOP. Summer is starting and we want our kids to have fun this vacation, let Chef Hannah Herrera teach our kids simple and fun recipes that they will truly enjoy. The recipes are Semi-sweet Choco Chip Cookies, White Choco Chip Cookies, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies, Fudge Brownies and Butterscotch. Kids will make their own products and will decorate it also. For P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m NEW CLASS.

OTHER CLASSES OFFERING

February 25, Sunday - BASIC CULINARY MATH. Learn basic food costing the simple and right way from Chef Hannah Herrera, pastry chef and instructor. Includes Bakers percentage, conversion of recipes to different yields and other math applications for the kitchen for P1,800.00 including all materials and snacks from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m NEW CLASS.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD CALL AT LEAST TWO DAYS BEFORE THE CLASS FOR RESERVATION.

DIPLOMA IN PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM
The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques from the finest institutions abroad with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian and Halal cooking, wine appreciation, gastronomy, table service and back of the house operations.
HIGHEST TESDA ACCREDITED PROGRAM. This program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare buffets and be involved in actual functions.
Learn the CACS method and be the Global Chef! Our program is the only school with its own restaurant outlet and its own internship program of 500 hours and Externship or an outside practicum program of 400 hours. It is also the only program with the mostly widely used software hospitality system worldwide that gives its graduates the global edge. Enrollment includes 3 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used. NO HIDDEN COSTS!
Classes will start on February, MWF or TTHS Schedule for 5:00 - 11:00 pm. Enrollment is ongoing.
For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn or Glady.



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HENY SISON
CULINARY SCHOOL

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES: This 20-day hands on class is our innovative way of teaching the basics of cooking & baking. This program is for anyone who wants to work towards becoming a professional chef. Class begins **April 11 – June 15, 2007.** Classes are held every **Wednesdays & Fridays** from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit.For more information call **726-5316 or 412 7792** and ask Rita or Jenny

March 1(Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m (classroom A) **BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison***Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. **P1,500**

March 1(Thursday)2:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) **BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison*** Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Center & Butterscotch Bars. **P1,500**

March 1(Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! FOOD CART IV - HOUSE OF ENSAYMADA by: Chef Vicki Villanueva.** from Stars & Bizu, let Chef Vicki share with you her wealth of knowledge and experience of patisseries and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operations.**5 new Recipes of Ensaymada:** Almond Praline Ensaymada, Ensaymada Majorca, Ensaymada de Malabon, Commercial Ensaymada and Special Ube Ensaymada. **Demonstration w/ student participation. Reservation is Requested! P2,600**

March 2(Friday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A)**NEW CLASS ! CHEWY CHUNKY COOKIES by: Heny Sison*** Chocolate Chocolate y Chocolate Chip Cookies, Fudgie Wudgies, Dark Brown Choco Chips, Moist Chewy Oatmeal Cookies, Banana Nut Chocolate Chunkies and Baker's Best Snickerdoodles. **P1,500**

March 2 (Friday)1:00 - 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) **PAELLA CLASS by: Chef Ed Quimson,** is a seasoned master chef of Spanish origin, creator of Chef Ed's Restaurant at Salcedo Village, Makati City and his latest restaurant FILOS at The Fort, Makati City. He has also lent his expertise to such restaurants as La Tasca, Via Mare, The Nielsen Tower, the Member's Lounge of the Phil. Stock Exchange & the Subic Yacht Club* Paella Negra, Paella a la Montana, Paella Catalan, Paella Sevillana (Vegetarian) and Paella Con Setas Y Mejilones. **P1,800**

March 3(Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! LENTEN SEASON SPECIALS by: Jacqueline H. Alleje,** owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) international easy-to-cook seafood and vegetarian recipes **Recipes:** Grilled Vegetable Salad with Balsamico Dressing, Green Papaya – Peanut Salad, Shrimp-Spinach-Tomato penne, Mixed Seafood Grill with Marinades, Salsas and Dips, Baked Cod with Ginger and Spring Onion, Sweet Potatoes and Tofu Curry and Mango Bavarian Cream. **P1,700**

March 3(Saturday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m (classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! OYSTER FESTIVAL by: Chef Vivian Syyap,** Private Chef/Caterer, Associates in Occupational Studies, Culinary Arts, with honors. The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, New York.* Oyster Cajun Shots, Poached Oysters in Wine, Baked Oyster with Pesto Cream, Oyster Rockefeller and Batter-Fried Oyster with Lemons. **Please reserve 3 days before. P2,000**

March 5–6 (Monday- Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Heny Sison** *Learn the basics of cake decorating: icing, color, star, shell, dots, outline and scallop borders; the rose, figure piping: clowns & booties. Each student will bake & decorate a character birthday cake. **Full participation. P4,000**

March 5(Monday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! LET'S BOTTLE UP ! by: Chef Juan Carlo Estagle,** one of our school's home-grown chefs who has proven his mettle as Executive Chef of Mezze Restaurant and Bar at Greenbelt 2, pastry consultant of Bakeshops and chef consultant to other multinational food brands. Putting up food for future enjoyment is a decidedly old-fashioned pursuit. Yet more and more cooks today are rediscovering it and even making a business out of it. In this course, you'll learn everything you need to know to bottle and preserve food efficiently, safely, beautifully, and of course, with delicious results. The outcome is sure to be a rainbow of jars filled with Dalandan Marmalade, Ginger Marmalade, Bacalao Filipino, Tawilis Sardines, Tuyo Pasta Salsa, Tomato Pasta Salsa, and even pickled onions and quail eggs. **P1,500**

March 5(Monday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom B)**TAPAS I by: Chef Ed Quimson** *Chickpeas with Chorizo, Albondigas, 3-ways w/ garlic (Gambas al Agillo), Pancon Tomate, Champignone al Agillo (Patatas Bravas). **P1,400**

March 6(Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! EASY PINOY PAMBAHAY I by: Chef Katherine Sion,** restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. This class will expose a beginner to basic cooking techniques which can be used for home cooking or even to start up a food business.
* Sinigang na isda sa Miso, Fried Chicken Tagalog Style, Beef Kenchi with Spicy Sauce, Pork Igado, laing, Buko Pandan **A reservation is required. Inclusive of lunch also bring your own personal apron. P1,650**

March 6(Tuesday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! PINOY BIG BREAKFAST by: Chef Katherine Sion.** Help me prepare this nice big breakfast for your family. It's simple and yet tastes so good! Have fun and learn how to cook it the right way. These recipes could also be used for business.* Pork Tocino, Skinless Garlicky Longganisa, Bistek Pinoy, Fried Rice w/ Garlic, Fried Rice w/ Bagoong, Atsarang Labanos, Chicken Arrozcaldo, Pospas. **A reservation is required. Incluvice of lunch also bring your own personal apron. P1,650**

March 7(Wednesday)9:00 am – 3:00 p.m.(classroom A) **HOUSE OF CHEESECAKE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva** *New York Cheesecake, Japanese Cheesecake, No-Baked Cheesecake, Green Tea Tiramisu and My Best Cheesecake. **Reservation Is Requested! P2,500**

March 8(Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A) **SECRETS NO MORE! by: Heny Sison** *Decadent Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing & Caramel Sauce, Lemon Torte, Ensaymada, Almond Sansrival, Strawberry Shortcake & Ube Cake. **P3,000**

March 8(Thursday)10:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! SWEET BUT SUGAR FREE CAKES II by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po,** Pastry Chef of Fleur de Lys Patisserie, dean's list graduate, California Culinary Academy. Another round of great cakes and pastries minus the sugar. *Cappuccino Tiramisu, Oatmeal Chip Cookie, Almond Sansrival, Vanilla Pannacotta, Chocolate Mousse Cake, Fudge Macadamia Brownies. **P1,800**

March 9(Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A)**BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca,** floral designer* Learn the theories, styles, trends, techniques, sourcing, flower care and maintenance, basic forms, arrangements and flowers for weddings. **Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500**

March 10(Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon (classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET - SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 1 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje*** This class is suitable for all people who want to be able to cook healthy dishes, lose weight considerably and people with health concerns such as diabetes, high blood pressure and other dietary restrictions. The class will guide you through the principles of healthy nutrition. South Beach Diet phase 1 "Swiss Pinoy Style", which uses locally available ingredients. **Complete menu plan and recipes for 14 days of Phase 1. P1,500plus P700 recipe booklet for Phase 1**

March 10(Saturday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **HEALTHY GOURMET – SOUTH BEACH DIET COMBO CLASS PHASE 2 and 3by: Jacqueline H. Alleje** This class is suitable for all people who want to learn how to cook healthy dishes, deepen their knowledge of nutrition and weight control, as well as people with health concerns, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and other dietary restrictions. This class teaches wholesome recipes which reintroduce carbohydrates with complete recipe booklets for phase 2 and 3 of the South Beach Diet.. **P1,500 plus P700 per recipe booklet**

March 12(Monday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **BAKING I by: Heny Sison** * Super Moist Chocolate Cake with Mocha Filling & Fudge Icing, Pecan Tassies, Lemon Pie, Macapuno Bars, Crispy Sylvanna, Cream Puff with Caramel Topping, Butterscotch Bars & Sables. **P1,500**

March 12(Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **MEAT PROCESSING I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva.** Open a rewarding all day dining (tapsilog) or home based business. Apply the new concepts, principles and techniques of making a longanisa, chorizo, tocino, corned beef, tapa, luncheon meat, embotido from scratch. The preparation of ice tea, atchara and flavored rice, and lunch is included. **Reservation Is Required! P2,800**

March 13(Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS! EASY CHINOY PAMBAHAY I by: Chef Katherine Sion.** Learn from a step by step instruction that help you make a successful and delicious meal. Lunch is included.* Bean Curd w /8 Treasure Soup, Hainanese Chicken, Lion head meatball, Sliced Beef w/ Bamboo Shoots and Straw Mushroom, Chami w/ Sate Sauce and Macadamia Black Sesame Cookie **A reservation is required. Inclusive of lunch also bring your own personal apron. P1,650**

March 13(Tuesday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m (classroom A)**NEW CLASS ! EASY CHINOY PAMBAHAY II by: Chef Katherine Sion*** Hot and Sour Soup, Fried Chicken Cutlet w/ Orange Sauce, Braised Pata Adobo w/ Quail Eggs, Shrimp Foo Yong, Szechwan Noodles and Sesame Seed Biscotti **A reservation is required. Inclusive of lunch also bring your own personal apron. P1,650**

March 13(Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! HOUSE OF CURRY by: Chef Vivian Syyap***Rogan Josh (Creamy Kashmir Lamb Curry), Japanese Katsu Curry (Pork Curry Rice), Thai Green Curry Chicken with Eggplant, Singapore Fish Heat Curry and Chana Dahl (Stewed Lentil Curry) **Please reserve 3 days before. P2,200**

March 14(Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m (classroom A) **SPECIAL TABLE AND HOME DECOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca**Table Centerpieces w/ actual demonstration and table setting presentation **Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P3,000**

March 15(Thursday)10:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! SPECIAL OCCASION PASTA by: Chef Juan Carlo Estagle*** Eggplant Timbale (Timballo di Melanzane), Mascarpone & Walnut Sauce Pasta, Red Onion & Black Olive Sauce, Spaghetti al Cartoccio (Spaghetti w/ Shellfish in Foil); Squid & Tomato Sauce Pasta and Soufflé di Tagliatelle. **P1,700**

March 15(Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS! COOKING FOR PROFIT by: Chef Vicki Villanueva.** Know the secrets to increase your profit. A **"must"** course for caterers, canteen, concessionaires, fast food operators, home-based/ packed lunch business focusing maximum yield and less shrinkage of your cooked products. Includes set-up, marketing, finding location, costing and packaging. **Recipes are:** Special Pork Barbeque, Embotido with Cheese Sauce, Pork Teriyaki, Burger Steak w/ Gravy, and Lumpiang shanghai w/ sweet and sour sauce. Lunch is included. **Reservation Is Required! P2,650**

March 16(Friday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A)**TAPAS II by: Chef Ed Quimson**Recipes: Croquettas, 3-ways w/ capsicum (Marinated roasted capsicum, Spanish vegetable stew & stuffed capsicum w/ Tuna ala Vizcaina), Chicken Empanada and Stuffed Mussels. **P1,400**

March 17(Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon(classroom A) **NEW CLASS! MUFFIN WORKSHOP by: Jacqueline H. Alleje*** Muffins can be considered the healthier alternatives to doughnuts and cinnamon buns. They are good to eat, and can be made with a wide array of nutritious and delicious ingredients. Learn the perfect steps to perfect muffins and choose from 10 mouthwatering recipes: Banana Yogurt Muffin, Chocolate-Ricotta Muffin, Spicy Raisin Muffin, Cocoa-Nut-Oatmeal Muffin, Sweet Potato-Walnut Muffin, Parmesan-Tomato Muffin, Chocolate-Cinnamon Muffin, and Low Fat Muffins: Herbed Brown Rice, Carrot-Orange and Raisin Bran Muffin. Students may assist in the preparation of the muffins. **P1,500**

March 17(Saturday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! SOUPS & SALADS by: Jacqueline H. Alleje.** Learn how to cook vegetable and chicken stock as base for Carrot-Almond Soup, Spicy Caramelized Onion Soup, Potato-Leek Soup. **Summer Salads:** Organic Greens with Fresh Asparagus and Cardamon Balsamico, Summer Steak Salad with Ginger-Lime Dressing and Swiss Pinoy Sweet Potato Salad. **P1,600**

March 19(Monday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! FAVORITE BREAD WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison*** Honey Bread, Ensaymada, Soft Cinnamon Roll, Cheese Rolls, Dinner Rolls and Pan de Sal. **P2,500**

March 19(Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **PANADERO PANADERIA 1 by: Nestor Magrimbao,** Baker, FERNA Corporation * Pacencia, Galletas, Otap, Biscocho, Mamon Tostado, Rosquillos. **Demonstration w/ student participation. P1,500**

March 20(Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **MY FAVORITE CAKES** *Caramel Cake, Banana Nut Cake, Pandan – Macapuno Cake, Flourless Chocolate Cake, Peach Walnut Torte and Brazo de Mercedes. **P1,500**

March 20(Tuesday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! MEXICAN FAVORITES by: Carmela Madrid,** is a freelance Food Stylist catering to consumer and institutional companies. She was trained at The Culinary Institute of America, California Culinary Academy, and Heny Sison Culinary School and also worked for the San Miguel Culinary Center as a Products Application Specialist. Enjoy the flavor of Mexico right in your own home. With there delicious and easy to make recipes. It likes you've spent hours in the kitchen. **Recipes:** Basic Red Mexican Salsa, Mango Salsa, Guacamole (Avocado Salsa), Flour Tortilla, Quesadilla – Chicken, Frijoles Refritos (Refried Beans), Beef or Chicken Fajita, Cheese and Corn Flautas, Traditional Mexican Red Rice, Chile Con Queso, Beef Enchiladas. **P1,500**

March21(Wednesday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m (classroom A)**NEW CLASS! FOOD CART VII (Featuring Bicho-Bicho) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva.** Offer a step by step preparation of bicho-bicho and its various flavors – Sugar Glazed, Cinnamon, Pulvoron, Cheese, Chocolate and Caramel. Includes Sago at Gulaman, Tsokolate eh! recipes to compliment the bicho, guide to choosing the right frying fat, computing for the food cost and selling price. **Reservation Is Requested! P2,000**

March21(Wednesday)1:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m (classroom A) **NEW CLASS! EMPANADA AT LUMPIA by: Chef Vicki Villanueva** *Empanada Kaliskis, Chicken Pie, Beef Pie, Lumpiang Gulay, Lumpiang Amoy, and Lumpiang Ubod. **Reservation Is Required! P1,650**

March 23(Friday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! THE ARTFUL CUPCAKE by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po.** Flavorful cupcakes with colorful designs. Learn how to bake, decorate and mix and match pretty cupcakes! Easy to make and easy to sell. **Recipes:** Classic yellow cupcake with buttercream (different colors, designs and flavors), Chocolate cupcake with 7 minute frosting, Triple Chocolate Cupcake, White Chocolate Mocha, Lemon Meringue, Strawberries and Chocolate. **Bonus Recipe: Sugar Free Cupcakes! P1,500**

March 23(Friday)1:00 – 4:00 p.m (classroom B)**NEW CLASS ! MORE THAN JUST PIZZA ! by: Chef Vivian Syyap.** Learn to create and extend the Pizza Dough into other delicious **EATS!** ***Foccacia:** Focaccia with Onions, Focaccia with Rosemary, Focaccia with Olives; **Sicilian Calzone:** Eggplant, Black Olives, Capers, Pecorino, & Mozzarella **Panzerotti:** Fried Pizza Pastries a la "Hot Pockets"; **Stromboli:** Pepperoni, Salami, and Provolone. **Please reserve 3 days before. P2,000**

March 24(Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **KOREAN COOKING I: A WORKSHOP by: Chef Cecile Park,** owner of Silla Korean Restaurant & food consultant to various Korean restaurants in Metro Manila*Beef Bulgogi (Tenderloin & ordinary), Chicken Bulgogi, Pork Bulgogi, Chap Chae, Mi Yuk Guk (Soups: Seaweeds, Beef or Tahong), Bibimbap & Kalbi Jim. **P2,500**

March 26(Mon.) Day 1, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.March 28(Wed.) Day 2, 1:00 – 4.00 p.m March 30(Fri.) Day 3, 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A) **NEW CLASS ! LITTLE CHEFS by: Carmela Madrid.** Welcome to the wonderful world of culinary for KIDS. We have prepared child-friendly recipes and cooking activities that will surely make any parent proud. Your precious ones will surely enjoy this 3-day HANDS-ON course: learning how to make exciting and special drinks, preparing exquisite snacks and cooking up an entire meal. A great learning experience, a venue to meet new friends and a confidence booster for all kids out there. **AGES from 6 to 11 years old.** DAY 1 – Drink: Cool Blue Water Shake, Meat: Crunchy Chicken Fingers, Pasta: My Mac and cheese, Snack: Confetti Pretzels; Dessert: Floating Fruit Parfait DAY 2 – Drink: Goin Bananas Smoothie, Meat: Tex Mex Taquitos; Pasta: Summer Pasta Carbonara, Snack: Surprise Cone; Dessert: Chocolate Squares. DAY 3 – Drink: Chocolate Mint Frosty, Meat: Burger Pizza; Entre: Chicken BBQ w/ peanut sauce; Snack: Banana Icicles; Dessert: Buried Treasure Cupcake. **P4,500**

March 26(Monday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) **BARBECUE, GRILL AND ROAST WORKSHOP W/ DIPS AND SAUCES PART 3 by: Chef Sam de Leoz .** Grill your way for summer and out of town trips for your family. Learn the right ways of grilling succulent dishes. *Rack of Beef Ribs Marinated in Italian Vinagrette w/ Avocado Oregano Relish, Roasted Pekeng Peking Dusk w/ Pancakes, Squid Parmiggiana w/ Bechamel-Marinara Suace, Indonesian Chicken Satay, Singaporean Pork Satay and Barbecued Mahi-Mahi w/ yellow pepper-cilantro pesto. **Please bring your own apron. P2,650**

March 27(Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) **CHINESE SEAFOOD SPECIAL I by: Chef Katherine Sion*** Crab with Sotanghon, Baked Shrimp with Garlic, Steamed Lapu Lapu with Tauso Sauce, Saute Shellfish with Tausi Sauce, Braised Beancurd with Seafood Hot Pot and Seafood Chow Fan. **P2,000**

March 27(Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.(classroom B) **NEW CLASS! BOTTLED PASTA SAUCES by: Chef Vivian Syyap** *Spicy Amatriciana (Bacon & Onion), Vonggole con Tomate (Clams in tomato sauce), Creamy Mushroom Pommodoro (Mixed Mushrooms in Tomato Sauce), Tuna con Tomate (Tuna & Capers in Tomato Sauce) and Basil-Walnut Pesto. **Please reserve 3 days before. P1,850**

March 27(Tuesday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m (classroom B) **NEW CLASS ! TAPAS III by: Chef Ed Quimson*** 3-ways w/ Meat Tapas, Chorizo in Apple Cider Sauce, Broad Bean w/ Hamon, Chicken in Garlic Sauce (Bunuelos de Bacalao, Russian Salad) and 3-ways w/ Seafood Tapas. **P1,400**

March 28(Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom A) **INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo,** licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants *Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice. **P2,500**

March 29(Thursday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.(classroom A)**DIMSUM I by: Chef Katherine Sion** * Congee, Siomai, Dumpling, Chicken Feet, Fried Shrimp Ball and Buchi. **P1,700**

March 29(Thursday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A)**DIMSUM II P1,700 by: Chef Katherine Sion*** Steamed Pork Spareribs in Tausi Sauce, Chicken Siomai, Sharksfin Siomai, Two Colors Siomai, Wanton Mami and Egg Tart

March 29(Thursday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **JEEPNEY, BUS STOP AND CARINDERIA GOURMET FOOD by: Chef Sam de Leoz.** Increase your earnings and attract more clients by learning to prepare carinderia food the gourmet way and gain the edge over your competitors.* Chicken Inasal, Menudo Shepherd's Pie, Pancit Puti w/ Chicharon Laman, Batangas Bulalong pang pa Bata w/ Chili Garlic Lime Fish Sauce, D's Liempo, Grilled Eggplant and Tomato w/ Spicy. **P1,950**

March 30(Friday)1:30 – 4:30 p.m.(classroom A)**NEW CLASS ! SOUFFLE BASICS by: Chef Vivian Syyap*** Cheese Souffle, Smoked Salmon Souffle, Spinach Souffle, Chocolate Souffle and Orange Souffle. **Pease reserve 3 days before. P1,850**

March 30(Friday)9:30 a.m. -4:00 p.m.(classroom B) **LENT AND EATER MEDITERRANEAN HOME COOKING MODULE (Part 3) by: Chef Sam de Leoz.** Learn to prepare easy step by step methods of basic Mediterranean dishes for the Lenten Season.* Baguette w/ Medley Spread: Pate, Tapenade, Prawn Butter, Saffron Aioli, Moroccan Date, Orange and Carrot Salad, Seafood Soup w/ Rouille, Seafood Risotto, Fish and Clams w/ Salsa Verde, Circassian Chicken and Iced Oranges. **P1,850**

March 31(Saturday)9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.(classroom A) **JAPANESE RICE TOPPING by: Chef Koichi Kondo**Recipes: Oyako-don (Chicken & Egg on Rice), Gyudon (Beef Bowl), Tendon (Tempura Bowl), Katsu-don (Pork Cutlet Bowl), Soboro-don (Minced Chicken & Egg Bowl), Ton Teriyaki-don (Chicken Teriyaki). **P1,700**

March 31(Saturday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m.(classroom A)**SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo** *Temaki-Zushi (Do-It Yourself Sushi Rolls), Bara-Zushi (Scattered Sushi), Inari-Zushi (Sushi Pockets), Futo-Maki Zushi (Thick-Rolled Sushi), Teka-Maki (Hand-rolled Tuna Sushi), Kappa-Maki (Sea Cucumber Sushi) and California Maki. **P1,700**

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Tasting notes from Spain

Part 1

OLIVE OIL TASTING IS AN art.

Among the many activities at Madrid Fusion were olive oil- and wine-tasting sessions. As different as wine and olive oil are, they also share many similarities. And if there are wine connoisseurs, there are also olive connoisseurs.

But why must one taste olive oil when it is mainly used as an ingredient and hardly ever consumed on its own? Because, like wine vintages, vast differences and many factors determine and dictate one finished product from the other.

The type and blend of olives, growing techniques, fruit maturity and harvest, soil type, climate, geographic latitude, production, pressing, storage—all of these play vital roles in the production of high-quality olive oil.

Sometime in September, I did a primer on the subject discussing the basics in detail. This is more about the art of tasting it. It's a great way to learn and to hone your senses. Over time and with much practice, you can become more adept.

Without being technical, olive oil is classified into:

- **Extra virgin**—most flavorful and costliest of all, cold-pressed, unrefined (refining takes away all character of the oil) product of the first extraction/pressing of the olives
- **Virgin**—first-press oil, unrefined
- **Refined**—oil goes through refining/filtration, sometimes labeled as pure or light
- **Fino**—blend of extra-virgin and virgin oils
- **Olive oil**—a combination of refined olive oil and virgin or extra-virgin oil.

The basics were pointed out to me by Fadrique Álvarez de Toledo y Argüelles and John Cancilla of Marquéz de Valdueza. Their oil was rated by the International Olive Oil Council (IOOC) as one of the world's highest in quality, obtained directly from estate-grown olives by most careful cold extraction, a family tradition for 500 years.

It got 8.5 in a 9-point scale. No oil was ever granted a perfect score.

The oil is a blend of four different olive varieties. Needless to say, it is delicious, perfectly well rounded, balanced and sound. Its attributes are fruity green olives, undertones of fresh cut grass, green almond, dried tomatoes, a touch of ripe bananas and a slight peppery finish... A splash of it on a dish is decadence.

MARQUÉZ de Valdueza

Oils of such quality are used mainly for finishing. Drizzle onto your salads or to a dish just before serving. Different olive oils, due to their character makeup, react differently even to the same ingredients.

Pretty much like wine, the right oil must be paired with the right component or the right dish to make a perfect pairing.

The oil is available in Manila at Spices (tel. 8310449, 7582159) at P1,800 for 500 ml.

Tasting pointers

- Work only with extra-virgin olive oils.
- Limit oil varieties to four per tasting to avoid palate fatigue. For blind tasting, remove labels.
- Pour a tablespoon of each into separate mini tasting glasses. Use tinted glasses so oil color does not influence judgment. Oil hue is not reflective of quality.
- Swirl the glass to wet the sides. Warm the glass with your palms, heat releases aroma.
- Tilt the glass and bring the oil as close to your nose as possible.
- Slowly inhale. Repeat the process. Note the sensations, write down your findings. Pause awhile before inhaling again.
- Start tasting the oil with the mildest aroma first
- Take a light sip (or dip plain white bread). Make sure that the oil coats the entire mouth.
- Let the oil stay in your mouth and inhale three times. Remember the flavors then spit out. Write down findings.
- Apples may be taken in between tasting.
- Good fresh oil should exhibit a definite olive-fruity note, followed by pungent, green and bitter plus other desirable notes, normally in decreasing strength. No negative attributes or defects should be present."—IOOC

Tasting terms

Olive oil is graded by acidity and by flavor. The Olive Oil Source points out the desirable traits: apple; almond—nutty; artichoke; astringent—puckering sensation created by tannins; banana; bitter—a preferred characteristic of olive oils from green olives or olives changing color; buttery; fresh—good aroma; fruity— flavor and aroma are similar to a mature olive; grass—taste of grass; green—young, fresh, fruity, often mixed with bitter; green leaf—when in the press a small quantity of fresh olive leaves are added, at times done to approximate the genuine green taste of green olives; harmonious—qualities of the oil blend and work well; hay-dried grass flavor; melon— perfume-y; musky, nutty, woody—when not overpowering; peppery; pungent—rough, burning or biting sensation in the throat; suave—characteristics of mature olives; rotund—a pasty body that fills and satisfies without the aromatic character from mature olives; sweet—opposite of bitter, stringent, pungent.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Asian way with pork, duck and chicken

COOKING CLASSES

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL OF Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

Feb. 16—Asian '07 (all-new): Taro Croquettes, Sugar-cooked Pork, Vietnamese-style Duck a l'Orange, Glutinous in Soy Sauce, Crispy Fried Flour-coated Chicken, Coconut Pudding.

Feb. 17—Coriander, Cilantro, Wansuy (all-new): Homemade Fish Balls "Street Style" with sauces, Apricot Beef Kebab, Coriander Chicken Roast, Lamb Curry, Coriander Shrimp Rice, Shredded Beef with Coconut.

Feb. 19—The Many Ways of Pesto (all-new): Master the art of pesto making. Pestos: Genovese, Asian, Green Garlic, Sun-dried Tomato, Bell Pepper, Fruit and Nut, Dill; uses and applications, bring home your own bottle.

Feb. 21—Sole: Stuffed Baked Sole two variations, Sole Piccata, Sole Parmigiana; Curry Sole Fillets; Crisp Fried Sole; Lemon Sole; Sole with Brown Butter; eight delicious sole recipes. Call 9289296 or 9273008.

Indian cooking

San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center teachers the basics of Indian cooking at "A Taste of India" 1:30-4:30 p.m., Feb. 28, Legazpi cor. Eagle Sts., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City. Rita Awasthi will teach Samosa filling, Chapati or Chicken Tikka plus a simple dessert. Fee is P900. Visit www.mygreatfood.com; call 6322000, 6719876 local 2771 and 402.

Cooking classes

Maya Kitchen Culinary offers "Easy As Pie," 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 17. The course includes Fresh Apple Pie, Walnut Pie, Caramel Meringue Pie, Chocolate Chiffon Pie and Lemon Meringue.

"Coffee Basic 101" (Barista Class), 2-6 p.m., Feb. 17, offers hands-on experience in grinding, dosing and tamping. Learn coffee history, coffee process, trouble shooting, blend, machine know-how, proper grinding, perfect froth, preparation of traditional hot coffee concoctions.

"Advanced Cooking," 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Feb. 20-23, will cover the technical aspects of running a kitchen from setting up a system for food safety, grand sauces, menu forms, recipe formulation/conversion, quantity cooking, etc.

Workshop on the preparation of sauces, international menu from entree to desserts and sample costing exercise are also included. Call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108; e-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph; or visit Maya Kitchen at 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City.

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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DIXIE Chicks and recording engineer Jim Scott accept Album of the Year award. AP

Dixie Chicks' Grammy win ends 3 years of repudiation

LOS ANGELES—THE DIXIE Chicks' sweep of the Grammys late Sunday completed a remarkable comeback from three years of death threats, boycotts and plunging record sales, sparked by one group member's remarks slamming President George W. Bush.

"Just so you know, we're ashamed the President is from Texas," lead singer Natalie Maines told an audience in London in early March 2003, 10 days before the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Maines did not know it then, but her comments were to unleash a political maelstrom upon her and fellow band members Martie Maguire and Emily Robison that reached extraordinary levels of ferocity.

Maines moved quickly to issue an apology as news of her comments filtered back to her homeland and the outrage mounted.

"As a concerned American citizen, I apologize to President Bush because my remark was disrespectfu," she said. "I love my country. I am a proud American." But by then, the damage had been done.

Within days, their music was being yanked from the country music playlists and airwaves, as the band were roundly condemned for being

DIXIE/ D2

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Hear Juris and Chin sing their latest songs from their Ivory Records album, New Horizon.

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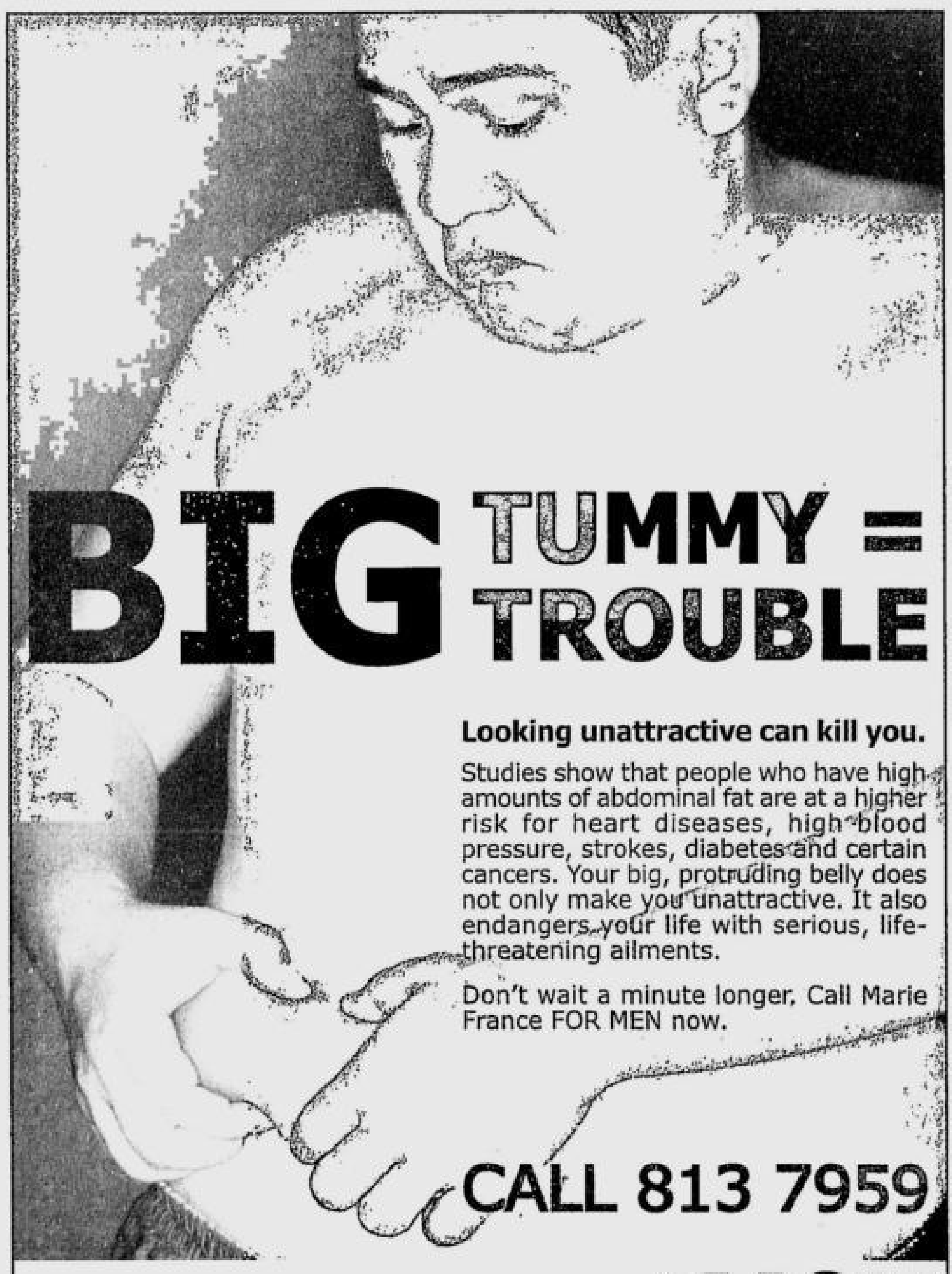

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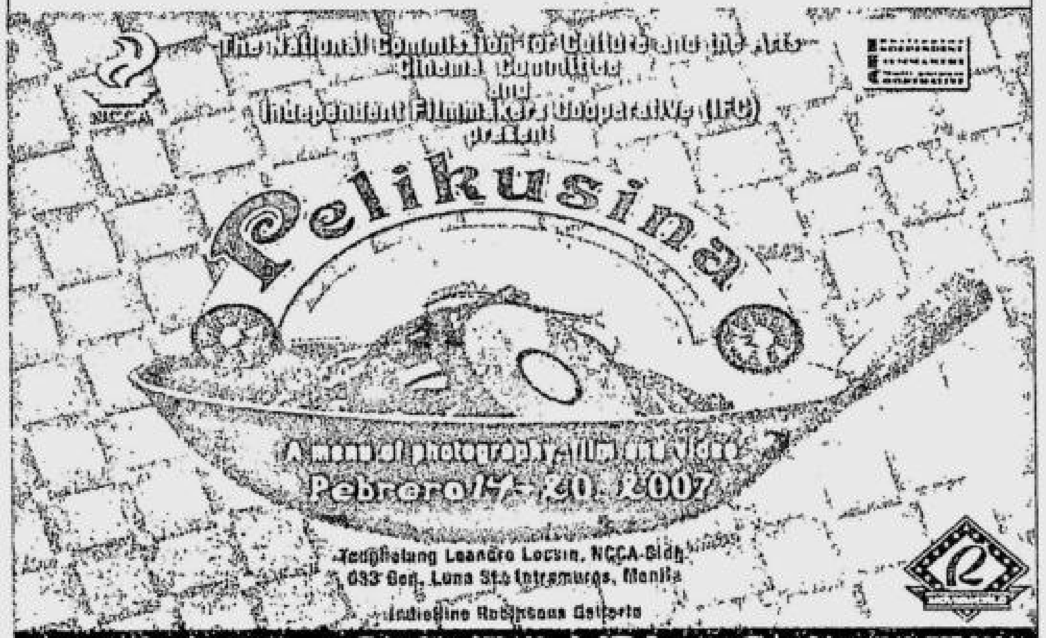

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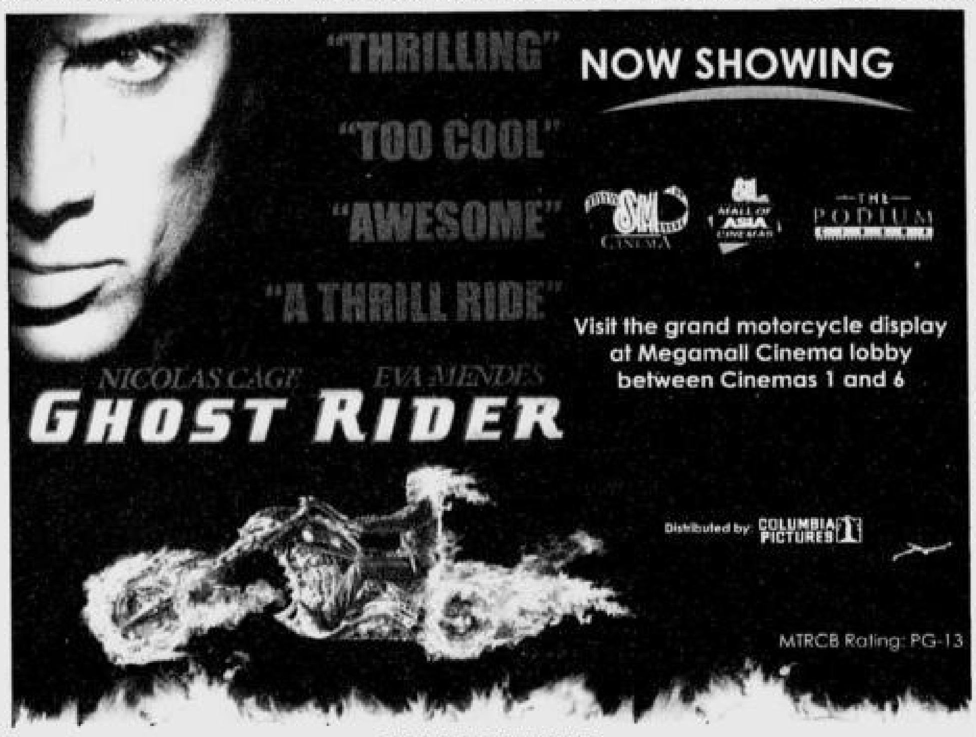

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11 BABEL
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE HOLIDAY
2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 GHOST RIDER
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 THE MESSENGER
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 THE CLEANER
12 THE PROMISE

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE CLEANER
7 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
8 AGENT X44
9 THE HOLIDAY
10 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE PROMISE

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE PROMISE
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 THE MESSENGER
9 THE CLEANER

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 GHOST RIDER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
9 THE PROMISE
10 AGENT X44
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE PROMISE
3 TENACIOUS D
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

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1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 THE PROMISE
7 MUSIC AND LYRICS
8 THE CLEANER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE PROMISE
6 THE PROMISE

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 THE MESSENGER
4 THE HOLIDAY

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE PROMISE
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE CLEANER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE PROMISE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 THE PROMISE
2 THE RETURN
3 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE PROMISE

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE PROMISE
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE MESSENGER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE CLEANER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 THE MESSENGER
7 THE PROMISE
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

VISAYAS
MINDANAO

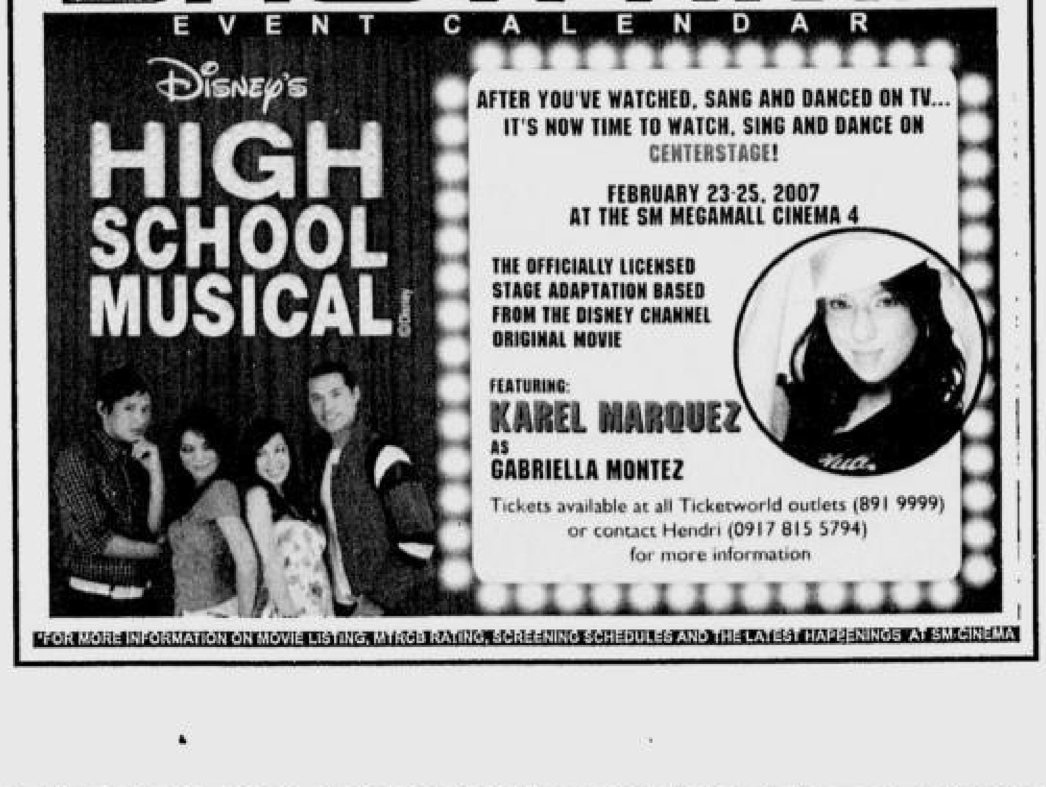
SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 BABEL
2 RESERVED
3 THE CLEANER
4 THE PROMISE
5 GHOST RIDER
6 THE HOLIDAY
7 RESERVED
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 GHOST RIDER
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER
5 BABEL
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 GHOST RIDE
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR



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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Dixie Chicks...

From page D1

unpatriotic and quickly renamed "The Dixie Sluts." The hysteria would see enraged protestors crushing piles of their CDs with tractors as the FBI scrambled into action to track an increasing number of death threats against the group.

"The reaction was as if Natalie had said 'Death to the President' or something," violinist and vocalist Maguire said in an interview last year.

Scare factor

"It was the bullying and the scare factor," adds Robison. "It was like the McCarthy days, and it was almost like the country was unrecognizable." The band have said that one of the most disappointing aspects of the furor was the lack of solidarity shown by other country performers during the period.

"A lot of artists cashed in on being against what we said or what we stood for because that was promoting their career, which was a horrible thing to do," Robison said.

The political backlash spawned a critically acclaimed documentary "Shut Up and Sing," released in theatres last year.

Even that project ran into controversy, with some major US television networks reportedly reluctant to air advertisements for the film.

Rehabilitation

"It's a sad commentary about the level of fear in our society that a movie about a group of courageous entertainers who were blacklisted for exercising their right of free speech is now itself being blacklisted by corporate America," the film's producer Harvey Weinstein.

Despite being personae non grata on country music airwaves, The Dixie Chicks rehabilitation was well under way.

In May last year, their album "Taking the Long Way" was an instant hit, landing at No. 1 in the pop and country charts despite minimal airplay.

Rather than run from the earlier controversy, the album saw the band tackle the turmoil of the previous three years head-on.

"Humbled"

The signature anthem from the album, "Not Ready to Make Nice," directly addressed the death threats against the band.

"And how in the world can the words that I said/Send somebody so over the edge/That they'd write me a letter/Sayin' that I better shut up and sing/Or my life will be over," the lyrics read.

The band thanked the music world on Sunday after scooping up Grammys for best album, record and song, as well as best country album and best country group performance.

"I think people are using their freedom of speech here tonight with all these awards. We get the message ... I'm very humbled," said Maines. *AFP*

POWER PLANT CINEMA

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE HOLIDAY **PG13** 1:30,4:20,7:10,10:00	**THE FOUNTAIN** **PG13** 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	**MUSIC AND LYRICS** **PG13** 12:50,3:15,5:40, 8:05,10:30
GHOST RIDER **PG13** 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	**CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER** **R13** 12:40,3:05,5:30, 7:55,10:20	**GHOST RIDER** **PG13** 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

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CINEMA 1	GHOST RIDER 10:30 , 1:20 , 4:10 7:00 , 9:50	PG-13
CINEMA 2	THE PROMISE 11:10 , 1:35 , 4:00 6:25 , 8:50	PG-13

PROMENADE GREENHILLS

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3	THE FOUNTAIN 11:10 , 1:35 , 3:50 6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35	PG-13
CINEMA 4	MUSIC AND LYRICS 11:15 , 2:00 , 4:40 7:20 , 10:00	PG-13
CINEMA 5	GHOST RIDER 11:05 , 2:00 , 4:50 7:40 , 10:30	PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM	Feb 16 & 17 , 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
	March 08 , 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	8:00 PM
		" DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	
	March 16 & 23 , 2007	SITTI IN LOVE	8:00 PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
	Feb. 20 , 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:00 PM
	March 9 , 2007	DAVE	8:00 PM

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hugh grant drew barrymore

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SUNFLOWER

GHOST RIDER
12:00 / 1:55 / 2:30 / 4:25
5:00 / 6:55 / 7:30 / 9:25 / 10:00

THE PROMISE
12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40

APOCALYPTO 2:05 / 7:05

THE HOLIDAY 12:30 / 3:20

MUSIC & LYRICS
12:15 / 2:35 / 4:55 / 7:15 / 9:50

THE FOUNTAIN
1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50

THE MESSENGERS
12:10 / 5:00 / 10:00

PLATINUM CINEMA

MUSIC & LYRICS
2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

Alimall 5

THE PROMISE
12:10 R4 , 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30

TROIKA
12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30

GHOST RIDER
12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25

HANNIBAL RISING
1:15 / 3:45 / 6:15 / 8:45

MUSIC & LYRICS
1:05 / 3:25 / 5:45 / 8:05

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

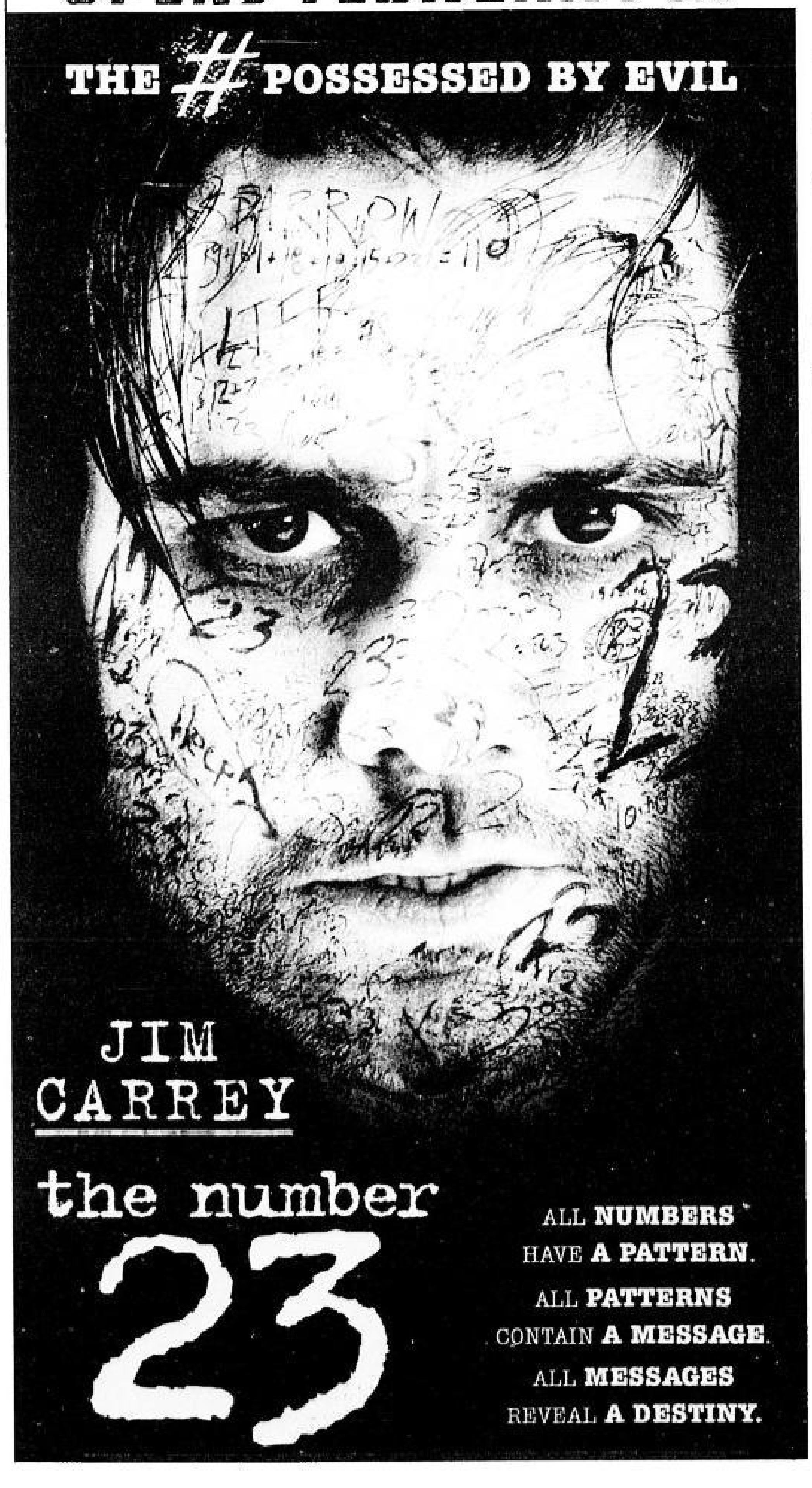
For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

PBA CHAMPIONSHIP
Feb 16. Friday , 7pm - Ginebra VS San Miguel

THRILLS OF SPRING - GRAND ACROBATIC SHOW
February 18. Sunday , 8 pm

OPENS FEBRUARY 21



THE # POSSESSED BY EVIL

JIM CARREY

the number 23

ALL NUMBERS HAVE A PATTERN.
ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

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3 (DOLBY) MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) GHOST RIDER

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC & LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 GHOST RIDER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) THE PROMISE
5 TROIKA

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 8433994

1 THE PROMISE
2 TROIKA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 APOCALYPTO

THEATRES
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CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 THE PROMISE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1 THE PROMISE
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 (SDDS) GHOST RIDER
3 (DTS) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 GOLD (DTS) THE FOUNTAIN
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY
6 GOLD (SDDS) GHOST RIDER
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MUSIC & LYRICS
8 APOCALYPTO / HANNIBAL RISING
9 THE MESSENGERS
10 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) THE PROMISE
2 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
3 (DOLBY) MUSIC & LYRICS
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 MUSIC & LYRICS
5 TROIKA

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 THE PROMISE
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 TROIKA
4 APOCALYPTO/NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 THE PROMISE
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 GHOST RIDER
2 KAMASUTRA-3

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 MUSIC & LYRICS
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE HOLIDAY

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE PROMISE
2 ERAGON

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) THE FOUNTAIN
2 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
3 (DOLBY) MUSIC & LYRICS
4 (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 APOCALYPTO
2 (DTS) THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY) BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 THE PROMISE
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM/DECK THE HALLS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 THE PROMISE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) TROIKA
2 ROOM SERVICE
3 KISKISAN
4 (DTS) APOCALYPTO

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO
2 TATLONG BARAHA
3 (DTS) THE PROMISE
4 PARAISO
5 GHOST RIDER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 THE PROMISE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 TUKSO SI CHARITO

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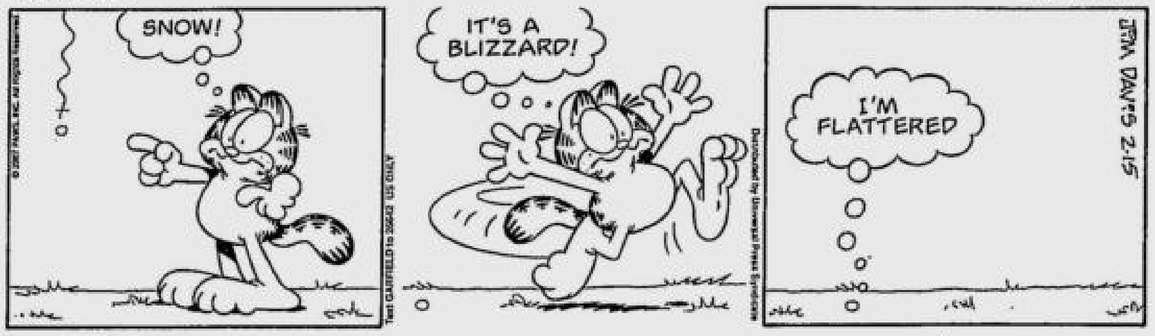
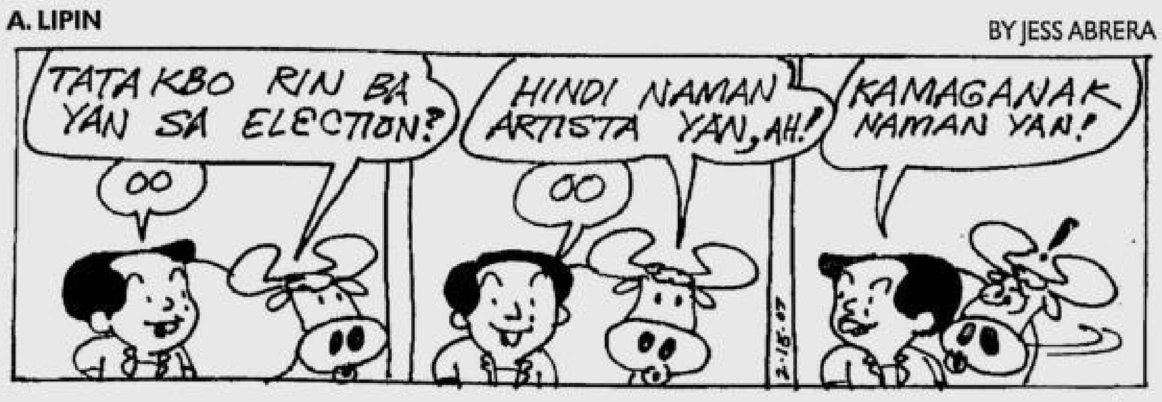
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


SNOW!
IT'S A BLIZZARD!
I'M FLATTERED
JIM DAVIS 2-15

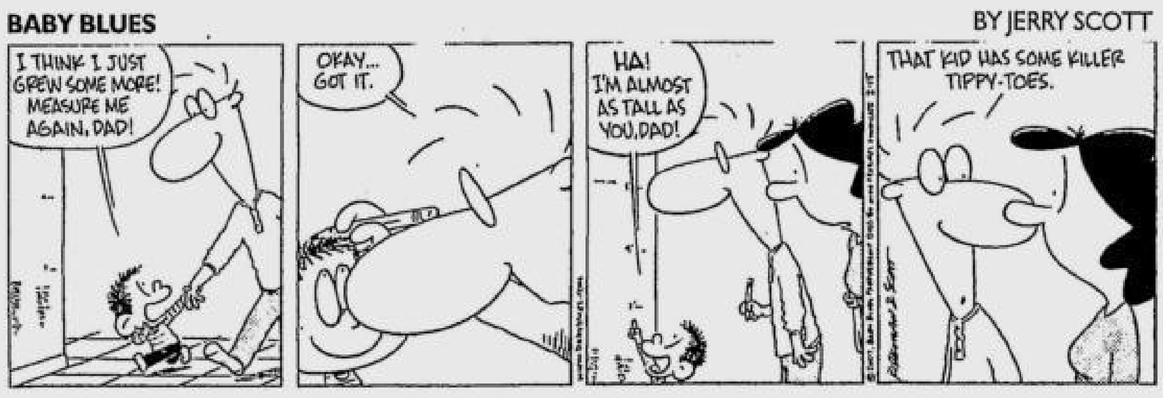
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TATA KBO RIN BA YAN SA ELECTION?
OO
HINDI NAMAN ARTISTA YAN, AH!
OO
KAMAGANAK NAMAN YAN!
2-15-07

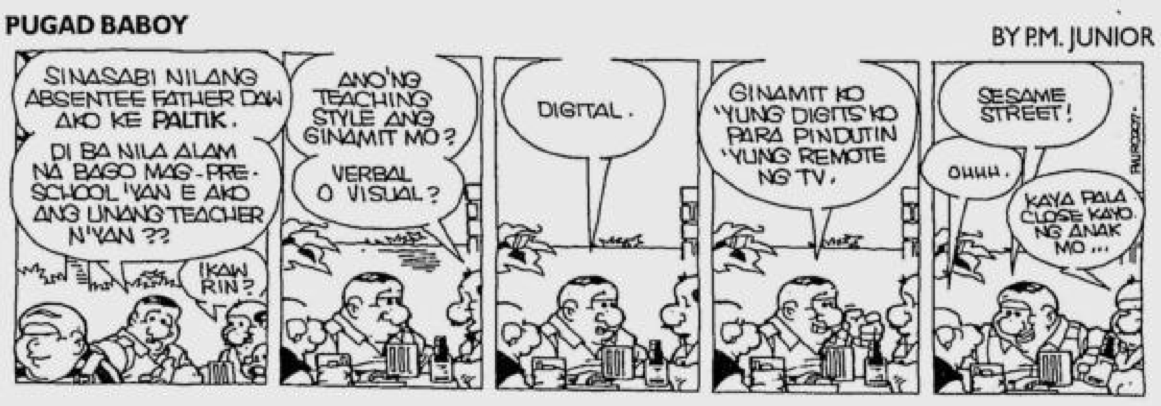
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I THINK I JUST GREW SOME MORE! MEASURE ME AGAIN, DAD!
OKAY... GOT IT.
HA! I'M ALMOST AS TALL AS YOU, DAD!
THAT KID HAS SOME KILLER TIPPY-TOES.

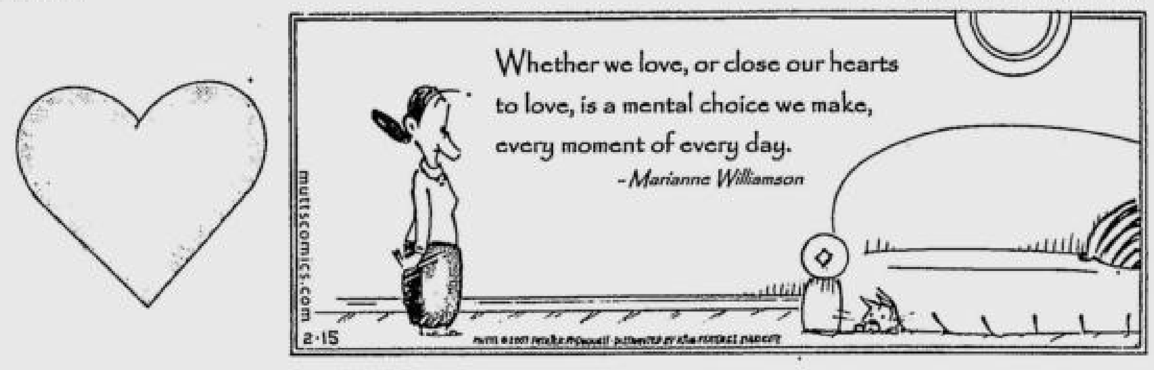
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SINASABI NILANG ABSENTEE FATHER DAW AKO KE PALTIK.
DI BA NILA ALAM NA BAGO MAG-PRE-SCHOOL 'YAN E AKO ANG UNANG TEACHER N'YAN ??
IKAW RIN?
ANO'NG TEACHING STYLE ANG GINAMIT MO?
VERBAL O VISUAL?
DIGITAL.
GINAMIT KO 'YUNG DIGITS KO PARA PINDUTIN 'YUNG REMOTE NG TV.
SESAME STREET!
OHHH.
KAYA PALA CLOSE KAYO NG ANAK MO...

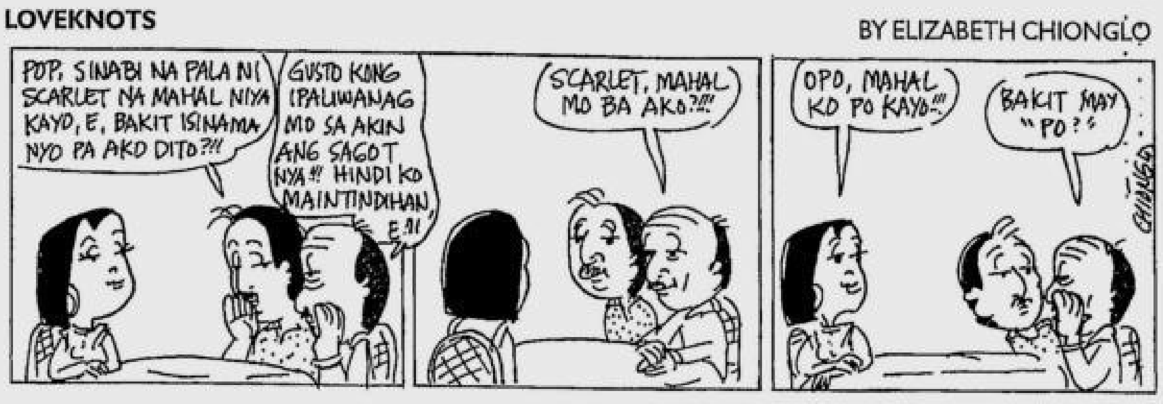
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Whether we love, or close our hearts to love, is a mental choice we make, every moment of every day.
- Marianne Williamson
muttscomics.com
2-15

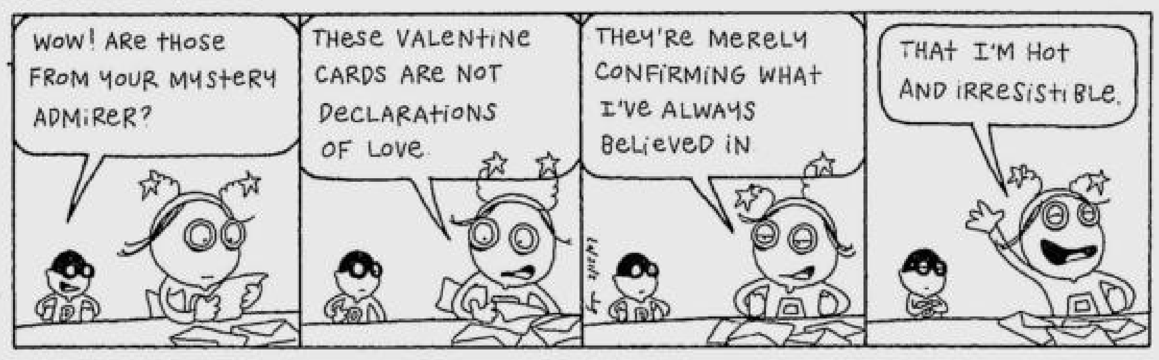
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


POP, SINABI NA PALA NI SCARLET NA MAHAL NIYA KAYO, E, BAKIT ISINAMA NYO PA AKO DITO?!!
GUSTO KONG IPALIWANAG MO SA AKIN ANG SAGOT NYA!! HINDI KO MAINTINDIHAN E!!
SCARLET, MAHAL MO BA AKO?!!!
OPO, MAHAL KO PO KAYO!!!
BAKIT MAY "PO"?
CHIONGLO

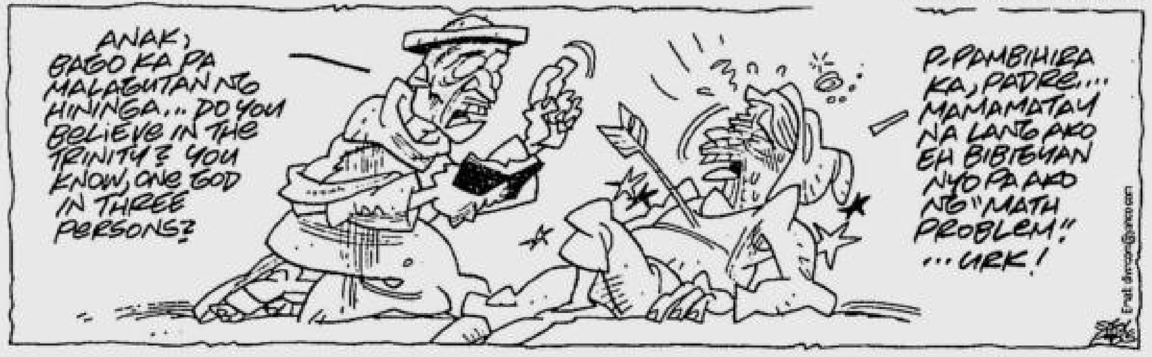
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WOW! ARE THOSE FROM YOUR MYSTERY ADMIRER?
THESE VALENTINE CARDS ARE NOT DECLARATIONS OF LOVE
THEY'RE MERELY CONFIRMING WHAT I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN
THAT I'M HOT AND IRRESISTIBLE.

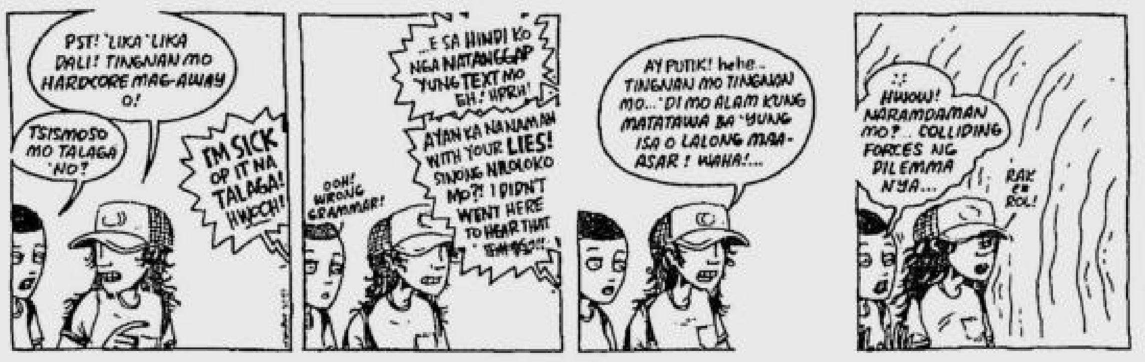
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANAK, BAGO KA PA MALAGUTAN NG HININGA... DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY? YOU KNOW, ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS?
P-PAMBIHIRA KA, PADRE... MAMAMATAY NA LANG AKO EH BIBIGYAN NYO PA AKO NG "MATH PROBLEM"! ...URK!

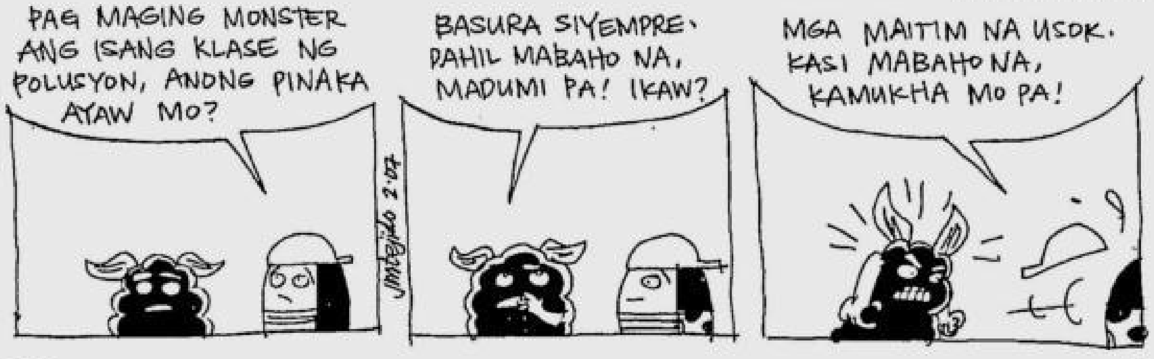
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


PST! 'LIKA 'LIKA DALI! TINGNAN MO HARDCORE MAG-AWAY O!
TSISMOSO MO TALAGA 'NO?
I'M SICK OF IT NA TALAGA! HWECH!
...E SA HINDI KO NGA NATANGGAP 'YUNG TEXT MO EH! UPRH!
AYAN KA NANAMAN WITH YOUR LIES! SINONG NILOLOKO MO?! I DIDN'T WENT HERE TO HEAR THAT THINGS!!!
OOH! WRONG GRAMMAR!
AY PUTIK! hehe... TINGNAN MO TINGNAN MO... 'DI MO ALAM KUNG MATATAWA BA 'YUNG ISA O LALONG MAA-ASAR! WAHA!...
HWOW! NARAMDAMAN MO?... COLLIDING FORCES NG DILEMMA NYA...
RAK EN ROL!

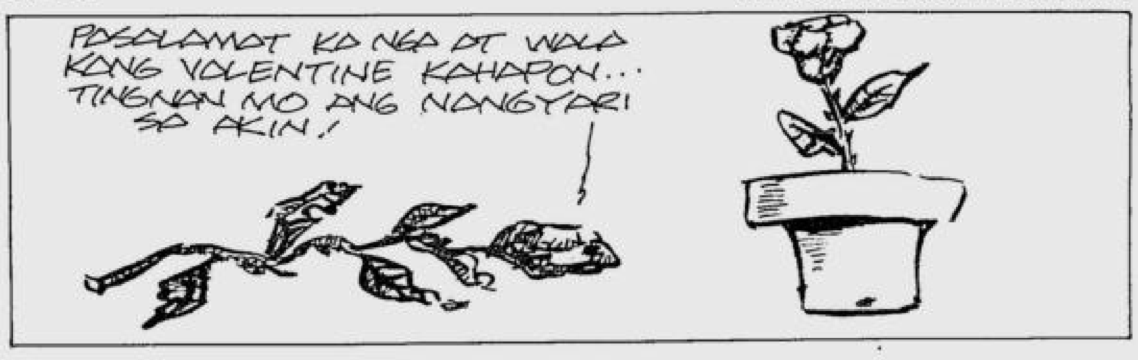
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PAG MAGING MONSTER ANG ISANG KLASE NG POLUSYON, ANONG PINAKA AYAW MO?
BASURA SIYEMPRE. DAHIL MABAHO NA, MADUMI PA! IKAW?
MGA MAITIM NA USOK. KASI MABAHO NA, KAMUKHA MO PA!
JMTejido 2-07

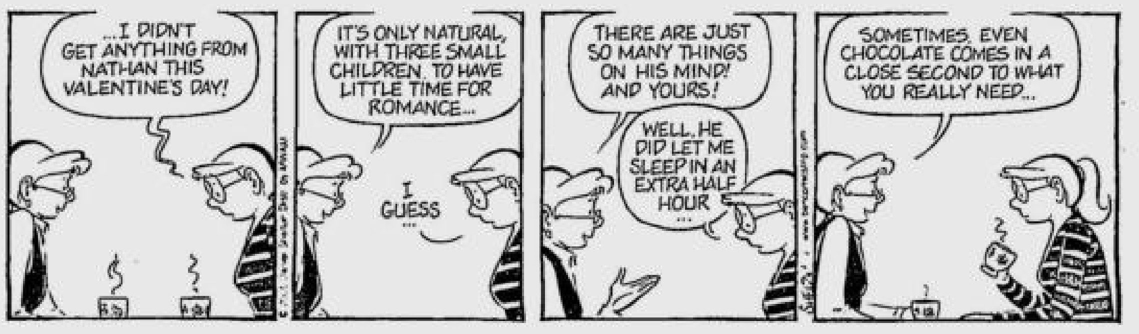
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PASALAMAT KA NGA AT WALA KANG VALENTINE KAHAPON... TINGNAN MO ANG NANGYARI SA AKIN!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


...I DIDN'T GET ANYTHING FROM NATHAN THIS VALENTINE'S DAY!
IT'S ONLY NATURAL, WITH THREE SMALL CHILDREN, TO HAVE LITTLE TIME FOR ROMANCE...
I GUESS...
THERE ARE JUST SO MANY THINGS ON HIS MIND! AND YOURS!
WELL, HE DID LET ME SLEEP IN AN EXTRA HALF HOUR...
SOMETIMES, EVEN CHOCOLATE COMES IN A CLOSE SECOND TO WHAT YOU REALLY NEED...

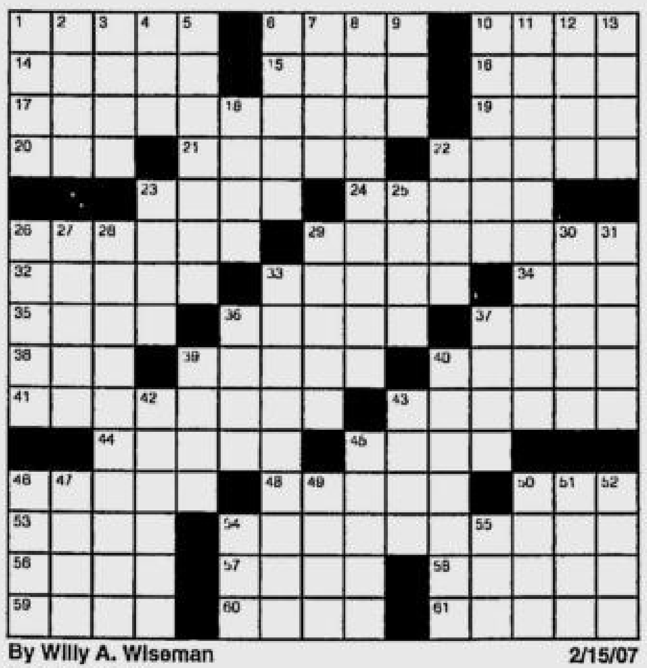
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Trample on
6 Hindu ruler
10 Mimicked
14 Italian isle
15 Frequently
16 After curfew
17 Start of a Henny Youngman quip
19 Graphics image
20 Driver's peg
21 Poultry choice
22 Representative
23 Lilliputian
24 Solemn vows
26 Supplies with new troops
29 Part 2 of quip
32 Slack off
33 Bob Hope film, "Call Me __"
34 Quaker's possessive
35 Nudge
36 Loud, raucous noise
37 Telegraphic period
38 __-de-France
39 __ Lumpur, Malaysia
40 Source of irritation
41 Part 3 of quip
43 Bellowed
44 Belorussian city
45 Toddlers
46 Run off to wed
48 Drive erratically
50 Geologic unit of time
53 Litter weakling
54 End of quip
56 Hydrox alternative
57 Joie de vivre
58 People, places and things
59 Hebrides isle
60 Pact partner
61 Rustle

DOWN

1 Jazz glossolalia
2 Seize
3 Ron in Mayberry
4 "__ Miniver"
5 Relating to fish
6 Gravelly
7 Voice range
8 "Butterfield 8" writer
9 Goddess of folly
10 Dismount
11 Leader in a field
12 Jacket or collar type
13 Fender flaw
18 Holm and McKellen
22 Gillette blade
23 London art gallery
25 Super-duper
26 Type of transit
27 "Christ Stopped at __"
28 Turns a profit
29 Marshy lowland
30 Push roughly
31 Keyed in
33 Physician Emily or Elizabeth
36 Bakery purchase
37 Briny septet
39 Welles role
40 Irish moonshine whiskeys
42 Step cautiously
43 Go wherever
45 Brownish orange
46 Greek Cupid
47 Lie in wait
49 Relative of etc.
50 Needle case
51 Holds title to
52 Snack
54 Actress Benaderet
55 As we speak



By Willy A. Wiseman
New York, NY
2/15/07

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

W	A	R	M	■	C	H	A	P	S	■	M	E	N	U
I	D	E	A	■	R	A	J	A	H	■	I	D	O	S
S	E	N	D	S	A	V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E
E	N	D	E	A	V	O	R	■	■	O	T	T	E	R
■	■	■	V	A	C	■	S	A	V	E	■	■	■	■
P	A	R	R	O	T	■	S	T	R	A	N	G	E	R
A	M	O	U	R	■	S	T	U	N	■	■	E	L	I
G	I	V	E	S	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	S
A	G	E	■	■	L	I	N	K	■	A	L	I	V	E
N	O	S	E	C	O	N	E	■	L	U	S	T	E	R
■	■	■	■	V	O	T	E	■	E	O	N	■	■	■
S	H	E	E	T	■	■	B	L	A	C	K	T	I	E
C	A	L	L	S	S	W	E	E	T	H	E	A	R	T
O	I	L	Y	■	P	I	T	C	H	■	E	R	I	C
W	R	E	N	■	A	G	A	T	E	■	P	O	S	H

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2/15/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a warm, affectionate person. You have a wonderful imagination, and many of you have fantastic technical skills. The secret of your success is your positive outlook on life. (But you hate criticism!) You love nature, and you need to be free to travel and roam. This year might be one of the best years of your life. You'll be very powerful! **Birthdate of:** Matt Groening, cartoonist; Renee O'Connor, actress; Charles Tiffany, jewelry-store founder.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel nurturing or concerned about a friend today, probably a female friend. (Possibly, this is the other way around.) Be open to having a heart-to-heart talk with someone.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You will be noticed by others today, perhaps very briefly. That's because today's Moon is at the top of your chart. It might even be your mini claim-to-fame moment.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Do something different today. Visit restaurants, shops, stores or places you've never been before. Talk to people from other cultures or different backgrounds. You need stimulation!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to sit down and take care of loose details with insurance matters, inheritances, taxes and anything having to do with shared property. You might have to agree to disagree with someone.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Because today's Moon is opposite your sign, you'll have to go more than halfway when dealing with others. Conversations with partners and close friends will be significant.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Do whatever you can to get better organized at work and at home. Reduce the clutter around you. You'll feel better if you do.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Treat yourself to a playful activity today. Go to a movie, watch a game or enjoy fun times with children. Do anything just to please yourself today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to putter around home and take care of domestic details. It's also a good day for family discussions, especially with parents. You feel maternal toward others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is not a day to sit at home; get out and be active. Talk to people. Touch base with siblings and relatives. Satisfy your curiosity to learn something new.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Make friends with your bank account today. Find out how much money you don't have. Financial matters concern you now. (Stay on top of things.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Because today's Moon is in your sign, you might feel a bit more emotional than usual. However, the good news is that your luck is a little bit up!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Seek privacy and solitude today if you can. Work alone or behind the scenes. (You need a breather.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		6			2			
	2			8			4	
9						7		
		1			6			5
	8						3	
4			7			6		
		2						3
	4			7			8	
			3			9		

Difficulty Level ★★★
2/15

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	3	4	9	7	8	5	6	2
2	9	8	6	5	3	1	7	4
6	7	5	4	1	2	9	3	8
9	2	7	3	8	5	6	4	1
3	8	6	1	9	4	7	2	5
5	4	1	7	2	6	8	9	3
7	6	2	5	4	1	3	8	9
4	5	9	8	3	7	2	1	6
8	1	3	2	6	9	4	5	7

Difficulty Level ★★★

DID YOU KNOW...

'Idol' dictates US TV ratings

LOS ANGELES—Twenty million viewers tuned in to see the Dixie Chicks sweep the Grammy Awards on Sunday, marking the show's biggest US television audience in three years, Nielsen Media Research reported on Monday.

But unlike last year, when the music awards aired on a Wednesday night opposite "American Idol" and got clobbered in the ratings, the Grammys telecast on CBS lacked any overwhelming TV competition.

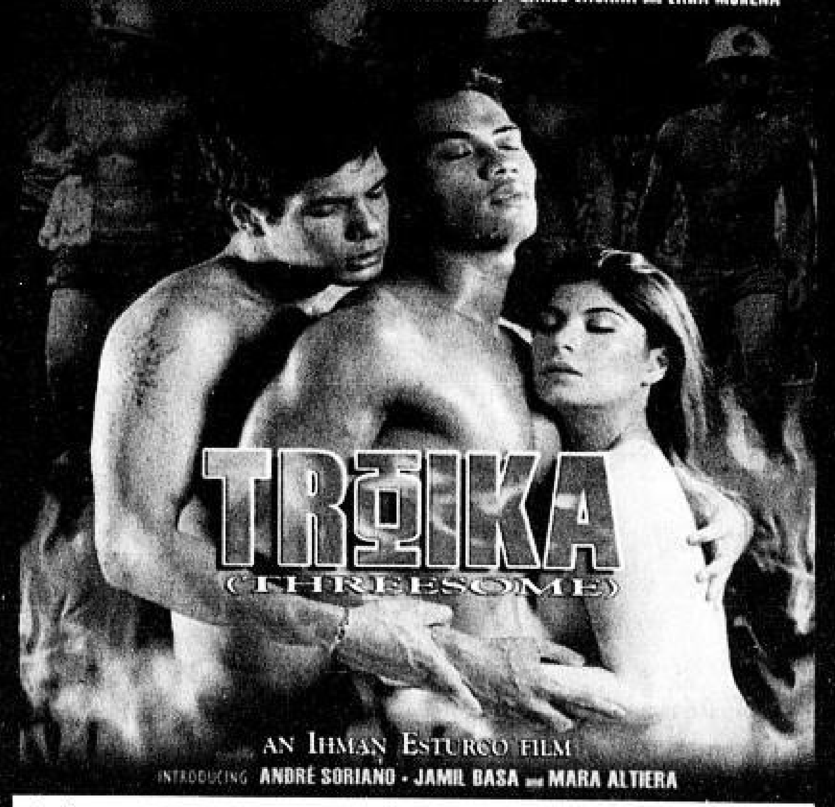
The biggest run for its money came during its second hour against ABC's "Desperate Housewives," which drew about 18 million viewers.

Nevertheless, TV audiences apparently prefer to watch the auditions of tone-deaf, amateur singers on "American Idol" than the glitz and glamour of the world's hottest recording stars.

Last year, overlapping "American Idol" during one hour in head-to-head competition, the 3.5-hour Grammys show drew just 17 million viewers, compared with 28 million who watched "Idol" that night.

Reuters

PG-13
2ND "KILIG" WEEK!
Cameron Diaz · Kate Winslet · Jude Law · Jack Black
a film by Nancy Meyers
the Holiday
UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT A WAVERLY FILMS PRODUCTION "THE HOLIDAY" ELI WALLACH EDWARD BURNS RUFUS SEWELL
HANS ZIMMER MARLENE STEWART JOE HUTSHING A.C.E. JON HUTMAN DEAN CUNDEY ASC SUZANNE FARWELL
BRUCE A. BLOCK NANCY MEYERS
sony.com/TheHoliday
Release through Solar Entertainment Corporation



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Daven Productions International
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TROIKA (THREESOME)
AN IHMAN ESTURCO FILM
INTRODUCING ANDRE SORIANO · JAMIL BASA and MARA ALTIERA
Gotesco Recto, Isettan Recto, Robinsons Ermita, Robinsons galleria, StarMall, ABC Guadalupe, Robinsons M.East, Sta.Lucia East, Ever Ortigas, Robinsons Imus, Robinson Dasmarinas, Festival Mall Alabang, Metro Polis, Llanas Alabang, Robinsons Novaliches, Gotesco Commonwealth, Gotesco GrandCentral, Ali mall Cubao, Remar 2, Masagana Pasay, Berma Baclaran, Glorietta Makati, Market-Market, Market Place Kalentong. www.troikafilm.com tel. 913-4823
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AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 MUSIC & LYRICS	2 GHOST RIDER	3 THE FOUNTAIN	4 THE PROMISE
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE FOUNTAIN	2 GHOST RIDER	3 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 THE MESSENGERS	6 MUSIC & LYRICS	7 THE PROMISE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 GHOST RIDER	2 MUSIC & LYRICS		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE FOUNTAIN GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 MUSIC & LYRICS		
	3 THE FOUNTAIN	4 THE HOLIDAY	5 THE PROMISE	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 GHOST RIDER	2 MUSIC & LYRICS	3 THE PROMISE	4 THE MESSENGERS
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE PROMISE	2 THE FOUNTAIN		
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 GHOST RIDER	5 MUSIC & LYRICS	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
The Philippine International Jazz & Arts Festival February 15, 2007	Auto Focus '07 People's Choice Awards February 17, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	**MARKET! MARKET!**
Microsoft Vista Launching February 16, 2007	The Philippine International Jazz & Arts Festival February 20, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rocha
February 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents SONG & DANCE
at REP's Globe Theater - February 9 to March 4, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Ayala Malls CINEMAS
Stargazing
Meet & Greet
The stars of You Got Me!
February 16, 2007
Friday, 5:30 PM
Glorietta Activity Center
Reserved seats at the Glorietta Activity Center for the first 200 moviegoers who will present any movie tickets purchased in any Ayala Malls Cinemas on February 16, 2007.
Plus! Exciting games, fabulous prizes & surprise treats await everyone!
Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby introducing Zanjoe Marudo
Star Cinema ABS-CBN
glorietta

ZSA ZSA
Sings Love at Glorietta
GLORIETTA ACTIVITY CENTER
FEBRUARY 17, 2007
7:00 PM
Concierge Hotline 752-7272
A Production of
glorietta

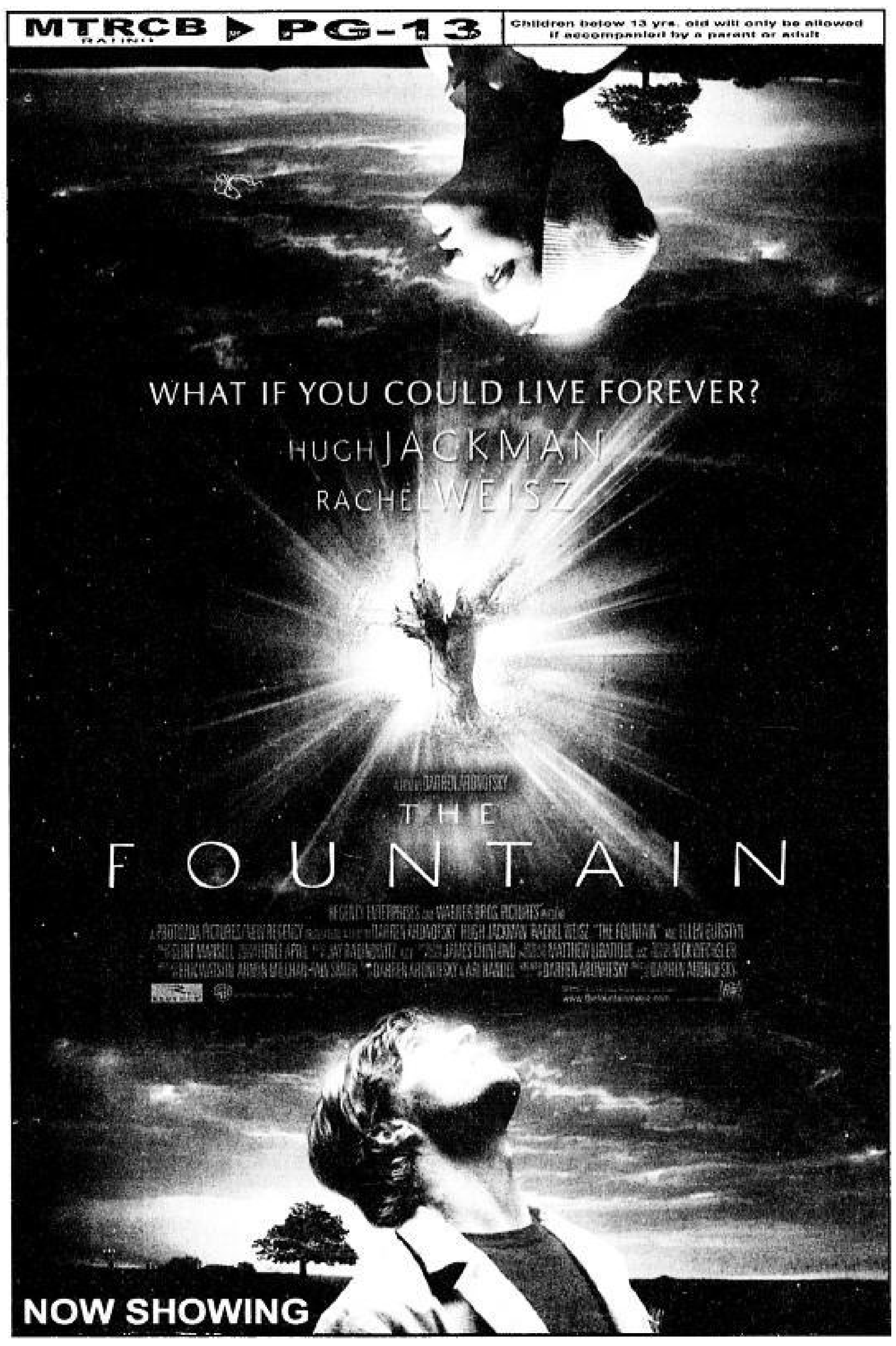
Dame Judi breaking a leg

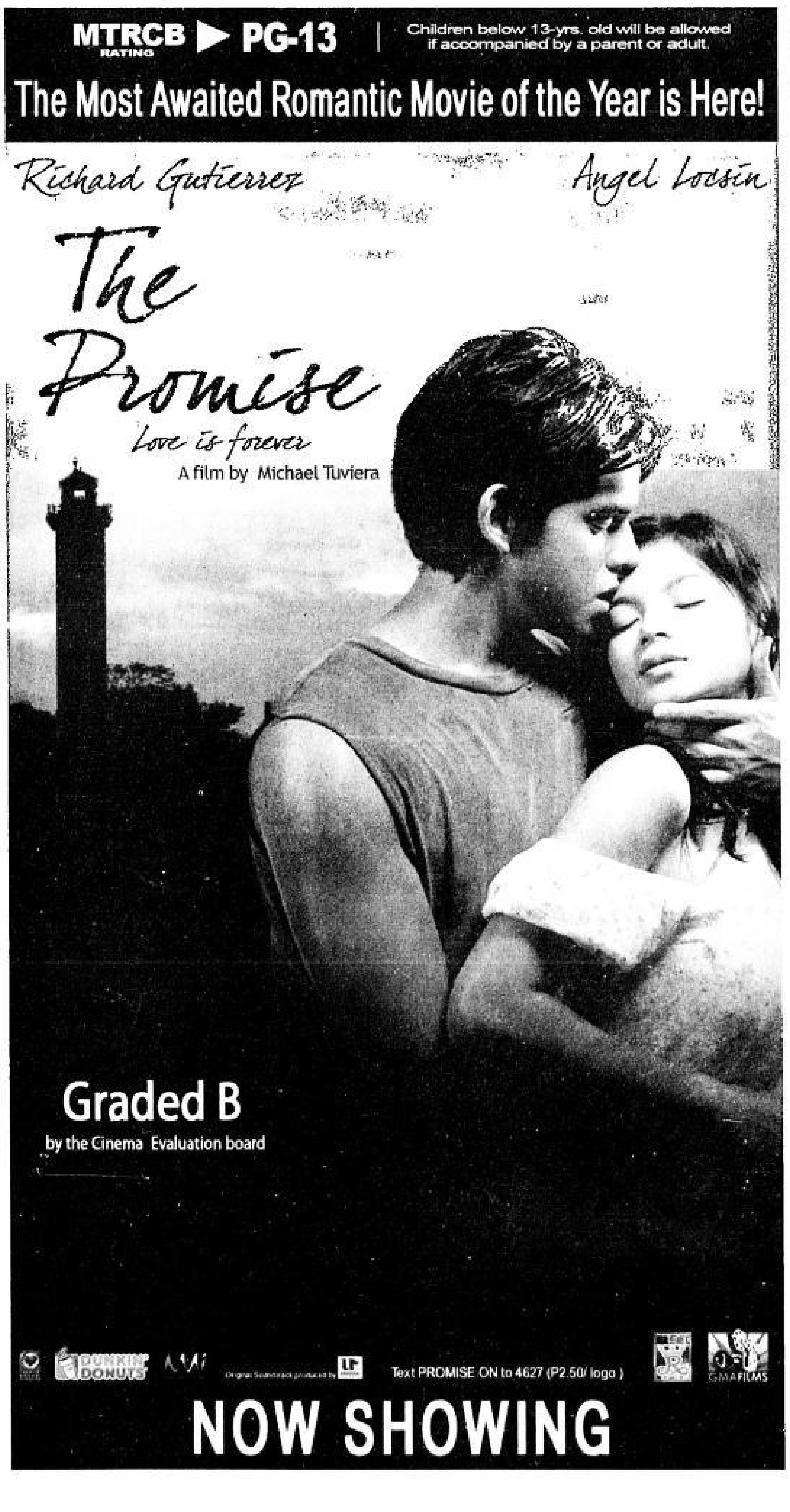
CHEER FACTOR

BERLIN—DAME JUDI DENCH advised punters on Monday not to bet on her winning at the Oscars, joking that not even the theatrical saying "Break a leg!" could bring her good luck.

"Don't put any money on me because you'll lose," Dench, 72, said at a good-humored news conference at the Berlin Film Festival when asked about the chances of winning Best Actress Oscar on Feb. 25 for her role in the acclaimed film "Notes On A Scandal."

She can't even be at the awards rites in Los Angeles, she said. "I'm to have a knee operation. I'm going to have my leg broken and put back together. I will watch and cheer from my bed." *Reuters*

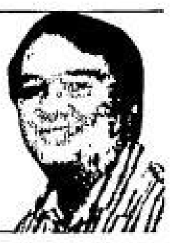

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
WHAT IF YOU COULD LIVE FOREVER?
HUGH JACKMAN
RACHEL WEISZ
THE FOUNTAIN
NOW SHOWING


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13-yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
The Most Awaited Romantic Movie of the Year is Here!
Richard Gutierrez
Angel Locsin
The Promise
Love is forever
A film by Michael Tuviera
Graded B
by the Cinema Evaluation board
DUNKIN' DONUTS
Text PROMISE ON to 4627 (P2.50/ logo)
GMA FILMS
NOW SHOWING

There are no accidents

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



"WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS A failure to communicate." That line, uttered by a character in the film "Hud," served as the informal caption for an entire "lost" generation of isolated and alienated urbanites.

It's a comment on how the problem has continued to fester that, decades later, an entire film, "Babel," has been made to expand the discussion on failed human communication and interaction.

The problem deserves the expanded treatment, because modern man's chronic involution helps account for the cruelty and violence so prevalent in human interaction today.

The casualness of violence is succinctly vivified in Alejandro Gonzalez Iñarritu's film by the seemingly accidental shooting of an American tourist by a Moroccan boy. But the movie quickly underscores the fact that, when it comes even to casual evil, there are no accidents.

The film soon widens its purview to include the tourist's children in the States, and their maid's need to go back to Mexico to attend her son's wedding.

Since the injured tourist and her husband (Cate Blanchett and Brad Pitt) can't fly home just yet, the maid is forced to take her young wards along with her.

At first, the kids have a great time in their new environment. After a while, however, cruel reality asserts itself once more as the maid, again "inadvertently," gets into trouble with US border guards, and their situation changes drastically for the worse.

It's instructive to see that both Moroccan and US-Mexican border landscapes are deserts, the sere and arid qualities of which add to the feeling of isolation that has the movie's characters in its clutches.

The plot thickens further, and more ambiguously, when the action shifts to Japan, where a deaf-mute teenager whose mother has killed herself is so consumed by loneliness, grief and isolation that she goes over the edge and uses her body to get men interested in her.

This dovetails quite nicely into the movie's theme of isolation. After all, lack of communication is most strikingly vivified by a deaf-mute's lot in life.

Coupled with the trauma of suicide, it really is more than enough for somebody to do anything to connect with others, even in a self-disrespecting way.

The big question is, what does this Japanese segment have to do with the incidents in Morocco and the United States? The film eventually answers that question in a tangential way, which underscores the movie's point about accidents and accidental connections—that aren't.

The film's web of "coincidental" links encourages ensemble acting from its cast, but some performances still stand out. Blanchett, Pitt, Adriana Barraza (the Mexican maid) and Rinko Kikuchi (the deaf-mute) all turn in felt and even tormented portrayals, some of them nomination-worthy.

But the most exceptional aspect of the production, aside from its vital and significant theme, is its prodigious versatility in terms of cinematography and editing. Each location and situation is given an appropriate visual style, adding to the movie's breadth and depth of artistry.

Valentine special

Ongoing until Feb. 17 is the Richmonde Hotel's Valentine Room Packages Special, which includes room, set dinner, bottle of wine, buffet breakfast and other perks. Call 638-7777, ext. 3703.

'Sabrina'

Teenage singer Sabrina has released her self-titled debut album, with 12 hit songs updated with a bossa nova twist.

SHANG CINEPLEX

① GHOST RIDER
MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

② THE HOLIDAY
MTRCB. PG-13
1:00, 4:00

③ MUSIC AND LYRICS
MTRCB PG-13
2:10, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00

④ THE FOUNTAIN
MTRCB.PG-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
GHOST RIDER
MTRCB PG-13
1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice.

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"TOO COOL"
"AWESOME"
"A THRILL RIDE"
NICOLAS CAGE
EVA MENDES
GHOST RIDER
COLUMBIA PICTURES
MARVEL
Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

Valentine
at Eastwood City
February 15
David Pomeranz
February 16
Nyoy Volante
February 17
Christian Bautista
Radio Partner
MAGIC 89.9
Eastwood City
Tel 687-6770 to 74 • 0917-8-EWCITY
8:00 PM
Eastwood Central Plaza
FREE ADMISSION

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 THE FOUNTAIN
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

2 GHOST RIDER
2:30, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00
PG-13

3 MUSIC & LYRICS
12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00
PG-13

4 THE HOLIDAY
2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10
PG-13

DIANE SCHURR

10-day jazz fest

SHOW TIME

JANICE HARRINGTON OF HAMBURG HEADS the list of performers at the opening of the "Brazilian Festival" today at the Glorietta, Ayala Center.

The 10-day event, organized by Pijazz Inc., features international and local jazz artists.

Tomorrow, Ugo Guido of Italy, together with the Henry Katindig Band and Mother Earth, will jazz it up at the Serendra.

Featured at Rockwell on the 17th are pianist Criz Medina, the UP Jazz Band and Repertory Phils.

Other scheduled performances are: Charmaine Clamor with the UP Jazz Ensemble, Feb. 18, ATC; Romy Posadas and the Jazzphil Ensemble, Feb. 19, the Podium; Wahijuara, Feb. 20, Market Market; Pinikpikan, Feb. 21, Eastwood; Escola de Samba de Manila, Feb. 22, Greenbelt; Flora Purim, Airto Moreira and Diane Schurr, Feb. 23, Sofitel Philippine Plaza tent; and Eldar Djangirov, Feb. 24, Sofitel Philippine Plaza tent.

Call 890-2016.

CRIZ MEDINA

Dance concert

The passion of flamenco comes to life in "Pasion y Fuego," a Valentine dance concert presented by Fundacion Centro Flamenco tomorrow and on the 17th at the Music Museum.

Directed by Leo Rialp, the show is expected to be filled with pulsating dances and the captivating music of Spanish guitars. The program includes special performances by Lucy Torres-Gomez, Marienne Gomez, Grupo Centro Flamenco dancers, Hotlegs, Grupo Yerbaguena and Antonio Soria from Malaga.

Tickets are available at Ticket World, Music Museum, and at Centro Flamenco. Call 751-2243.

Cueshe in concert

Cueshe will rock the Alberto's Music Lounge in Baguio in "Winston in Concert" on Feb. 17.

To sing their latest hits at the pre-Flower Festival Winston event are band members Ruben Caballero, Jay Justiniani, Jhunje Dosdos, Fritz Labrado, Mike Manaloto and Jovan Mabini.

Tonight

The Groove at **Merk's** Bar and Bistro, Greenbelt 3. Call 757-4720.

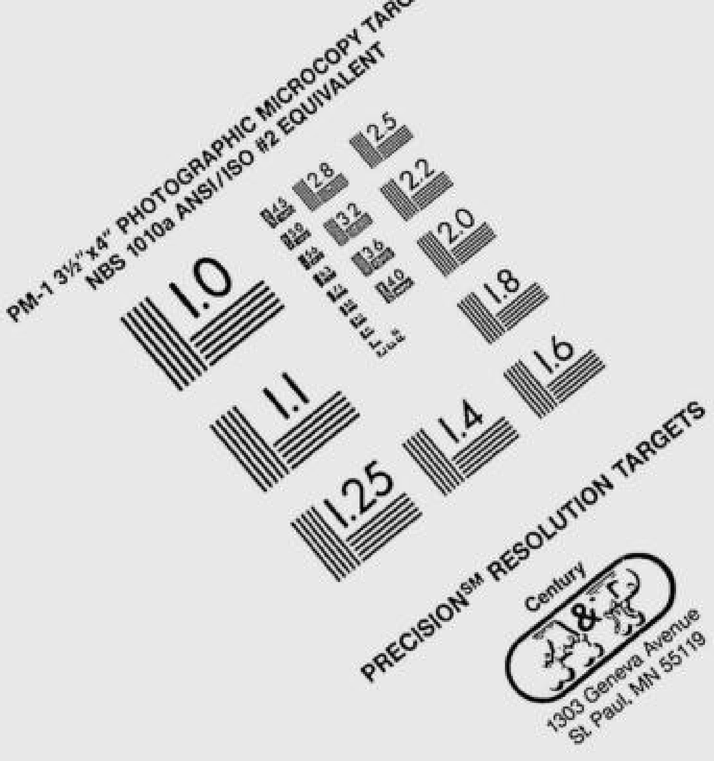
Spongecola at **SM Baguio**; 5 p.m. Autograph signing session follows the show.

Tomorrow

Erik Santos and **Rufa Mae Quinto** in "When Erik Met Rufa" The Repeat with guest **Ai Ai de las Alas** at the **Aliw Theater**

The Groove at **Merk's** Bar and Bistro, Greenbelt 3. Call 757-4720.

Bert de Leon, **John Lesaca**, **Cash Manalang**, **Roy Marinduque** and **Area One** at **The Bellevue Hotel**. Call 771-8181.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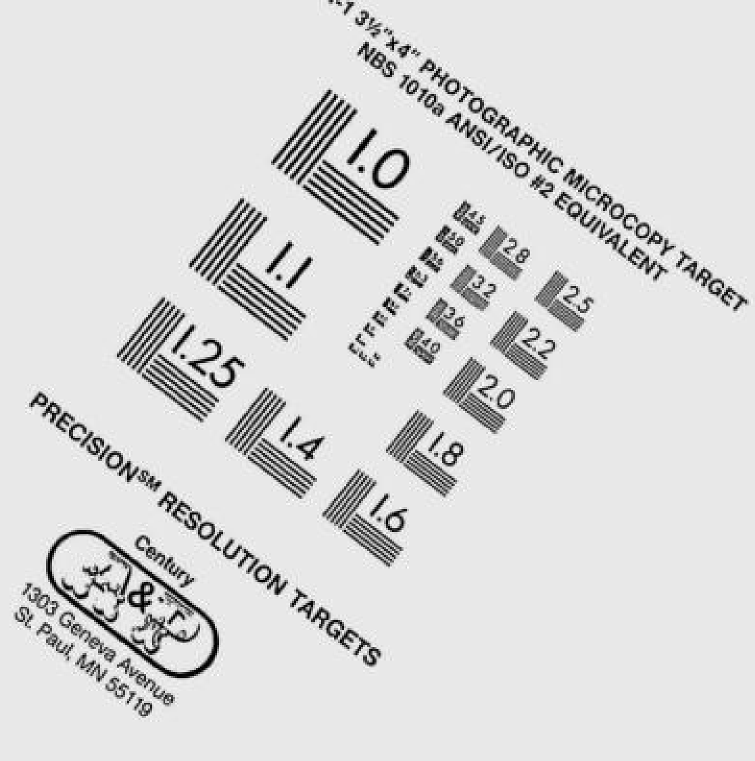
PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
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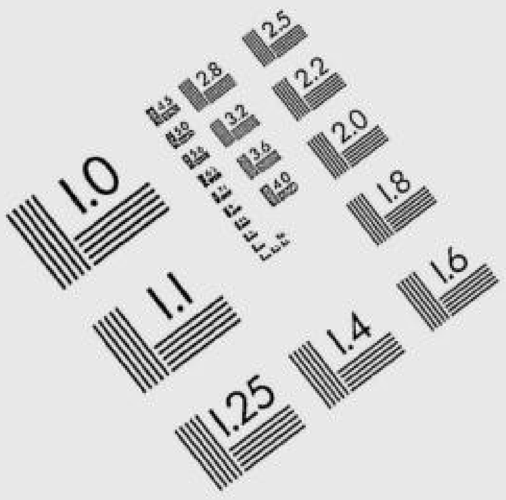
PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)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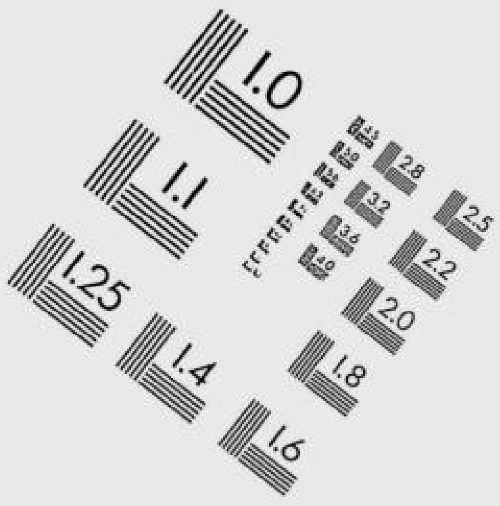
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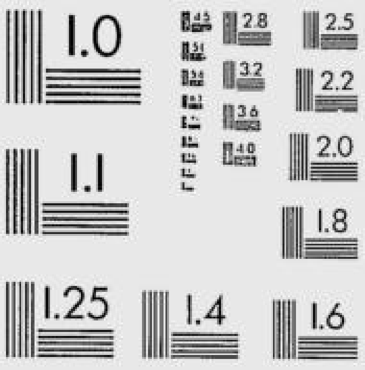
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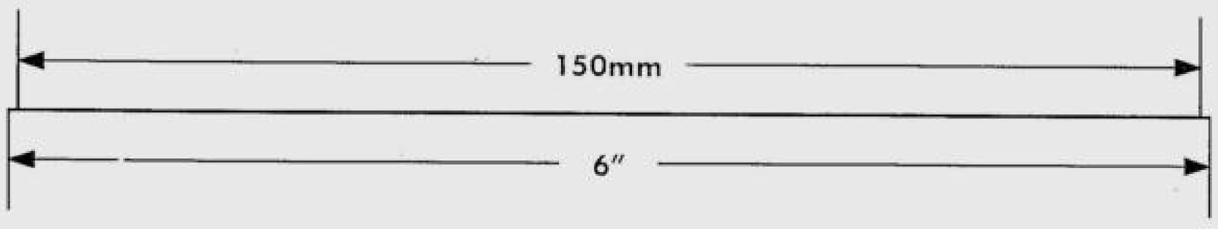

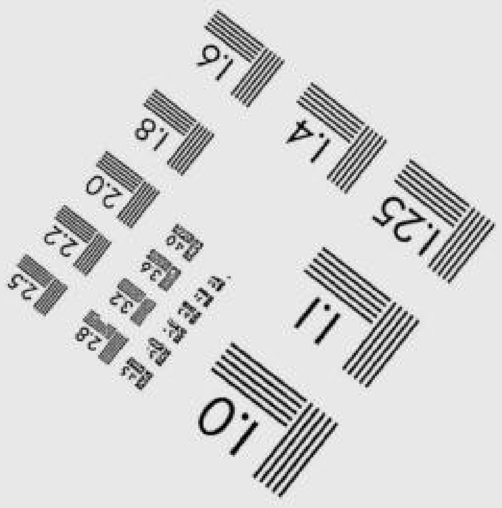
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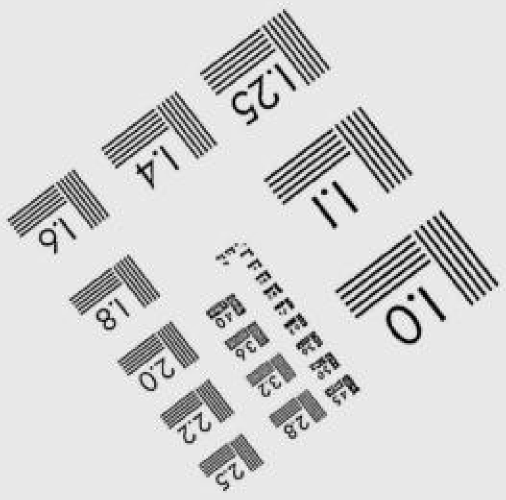
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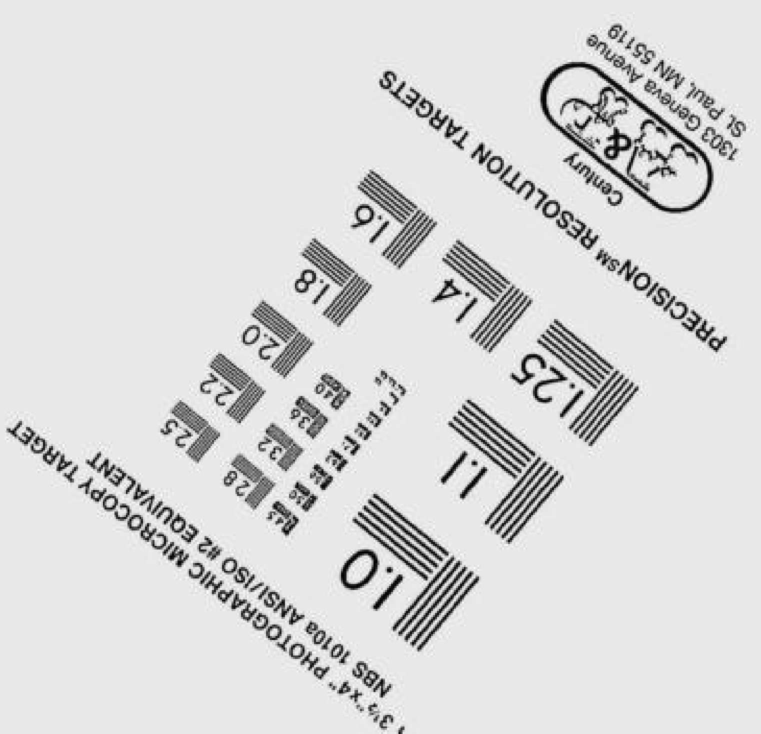
PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119
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PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
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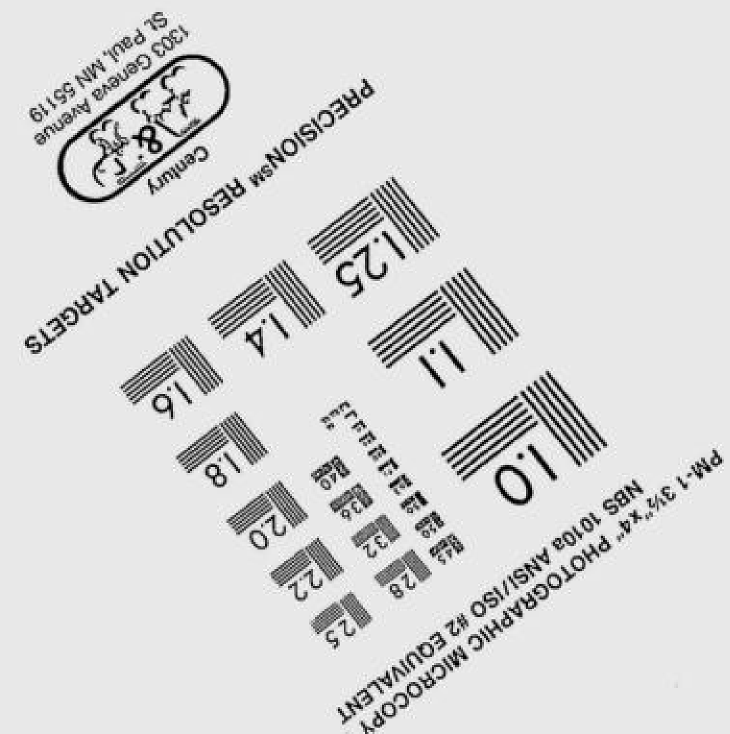
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St. Paul, MN 55119
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PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, PHILIPPINES

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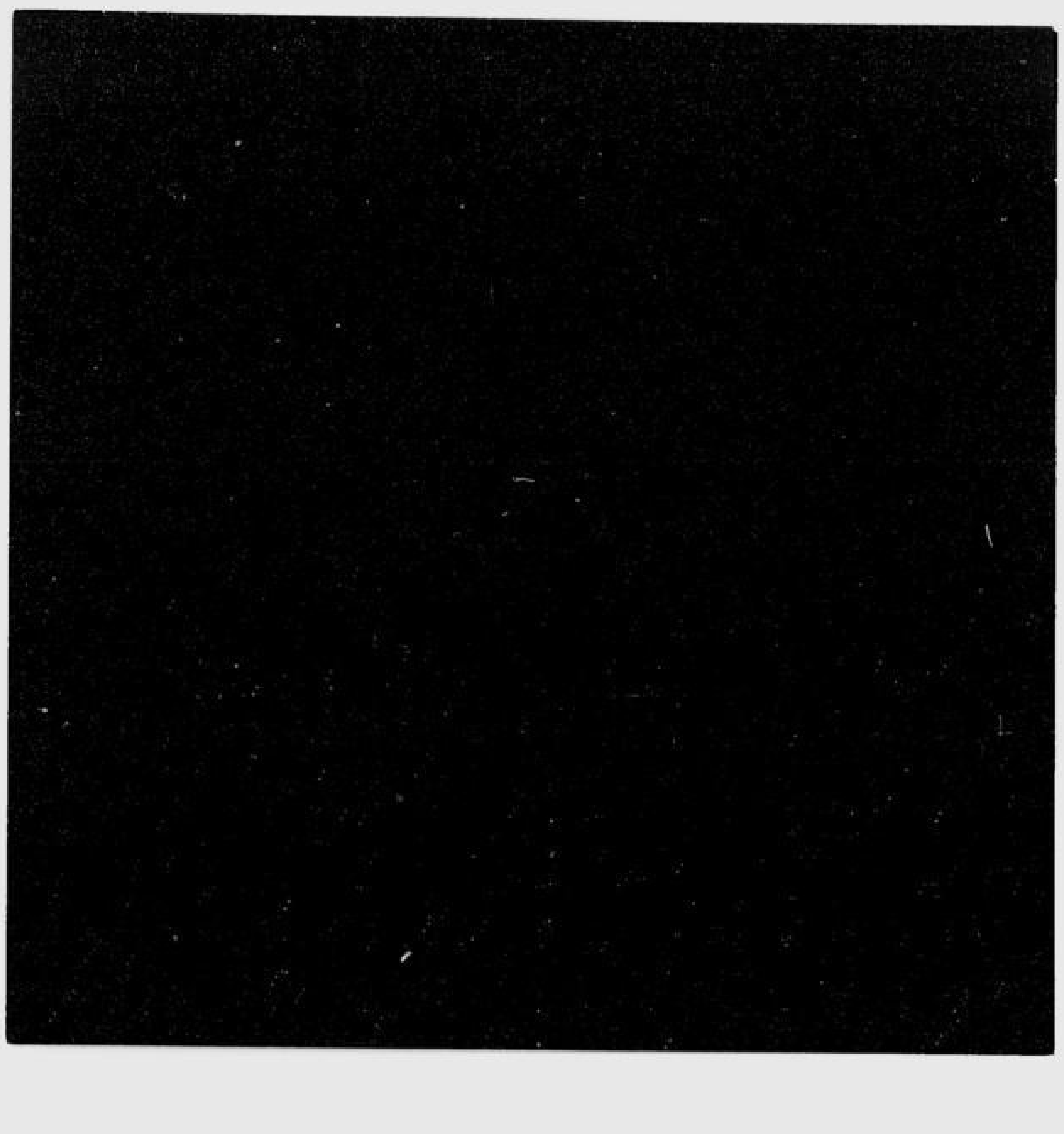

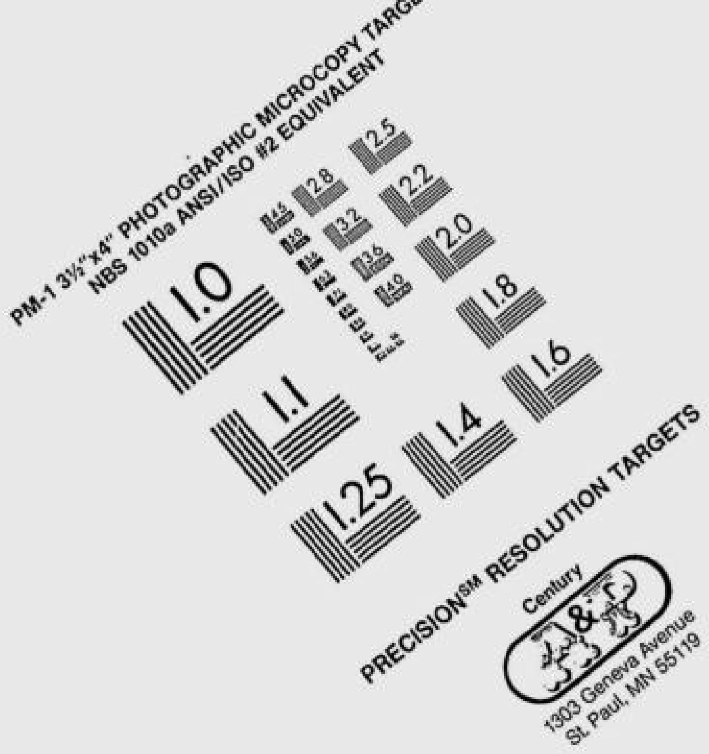
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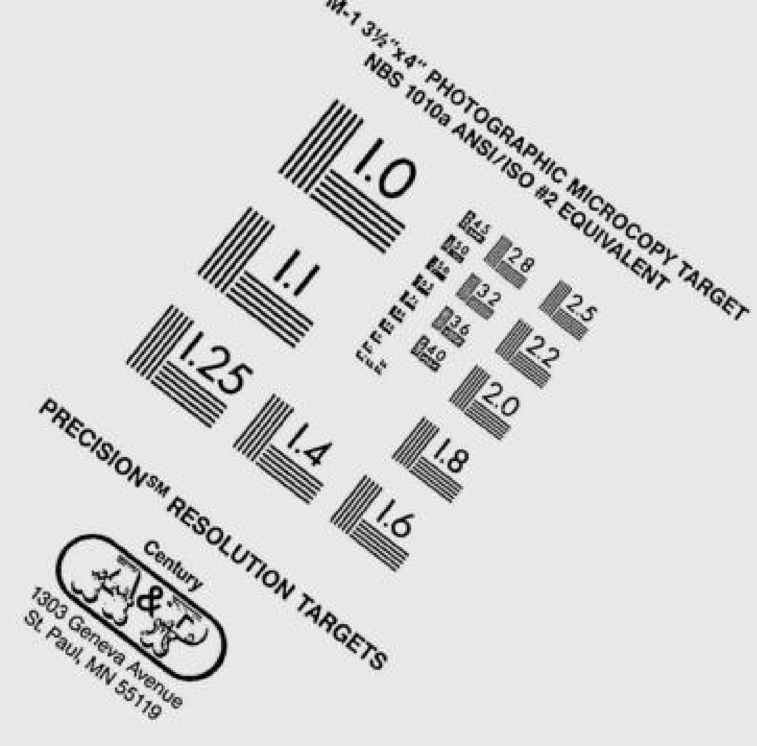
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PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
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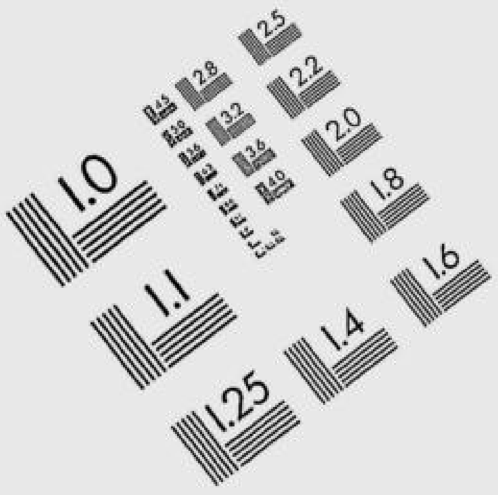
St. Paul, MN 55119

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)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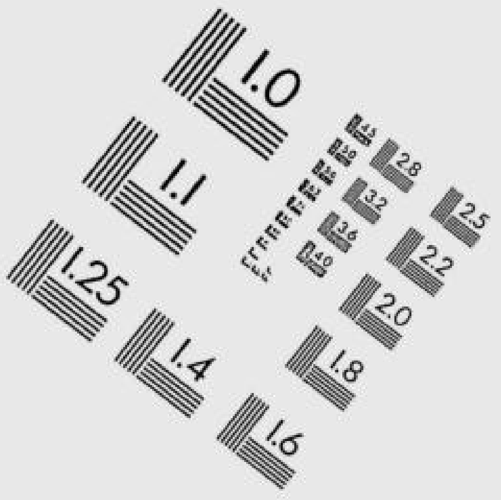
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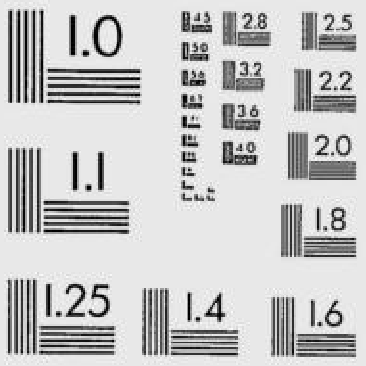
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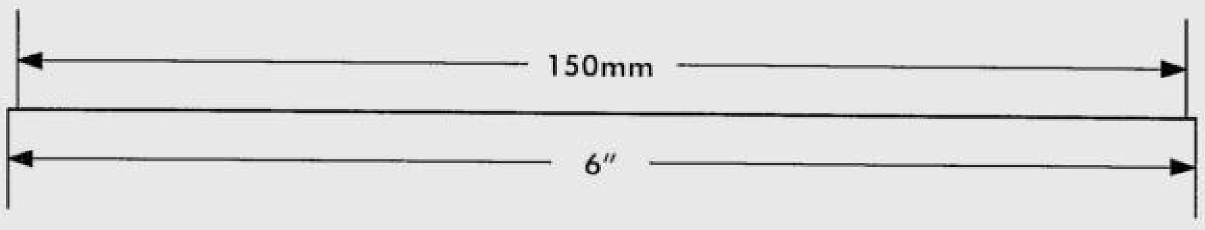

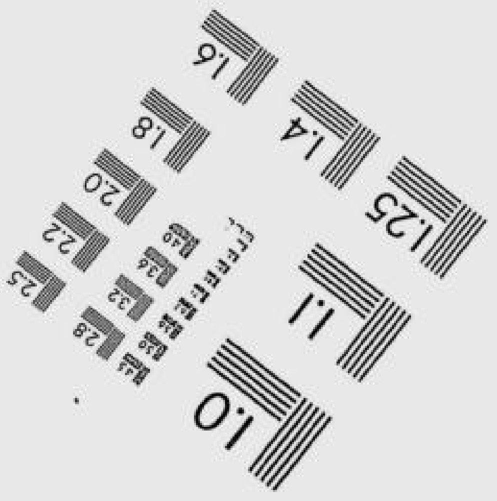
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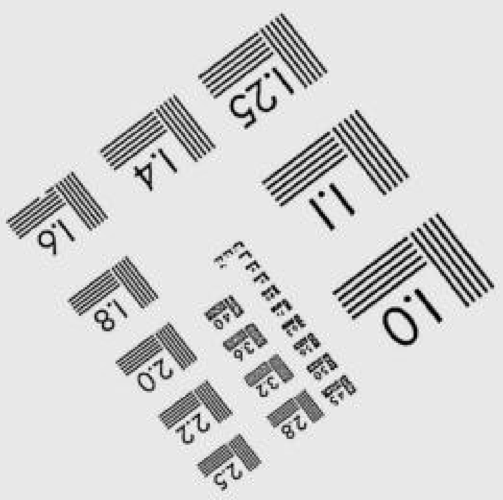
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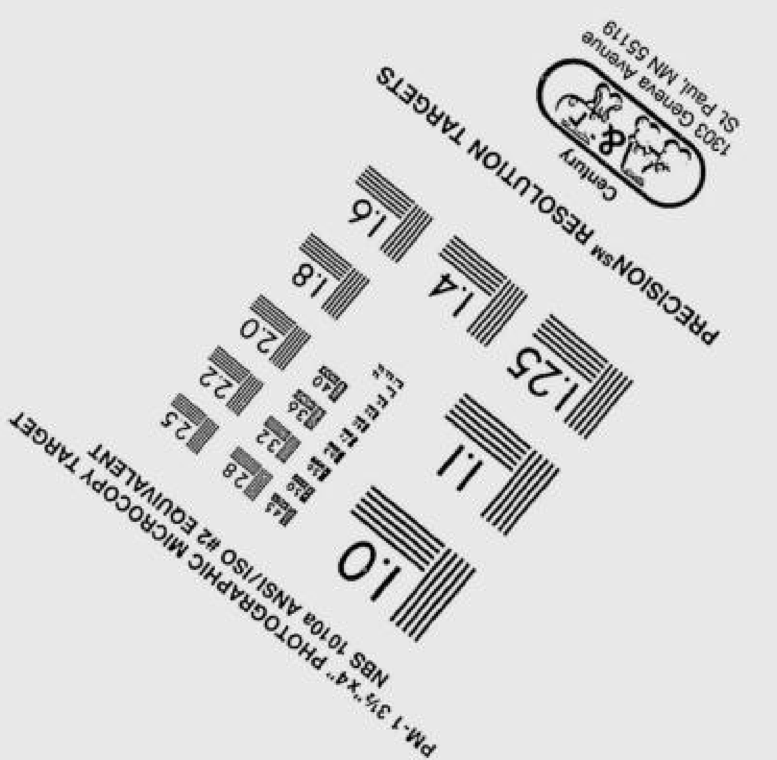
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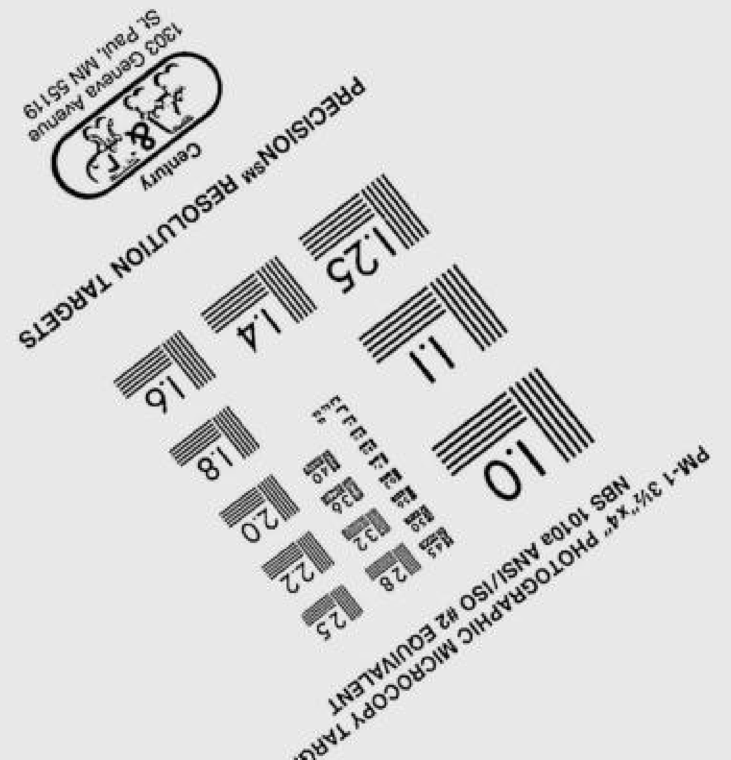
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